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THE  
DIVINE LEGATION  
OF  
MOSES  
DEMONSTRATED.  
IN NINE BOOKS.

The FOURTH EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged.

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*Warburton.* BY  
WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of GLOUCESTER.

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VOL. IV.

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L O N D O N,  
Printed for A. MILLAR, and J. and R. TONSON,  
in the Strand. MDCCLXV.



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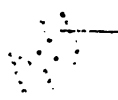
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### FOURTH VOLUME.

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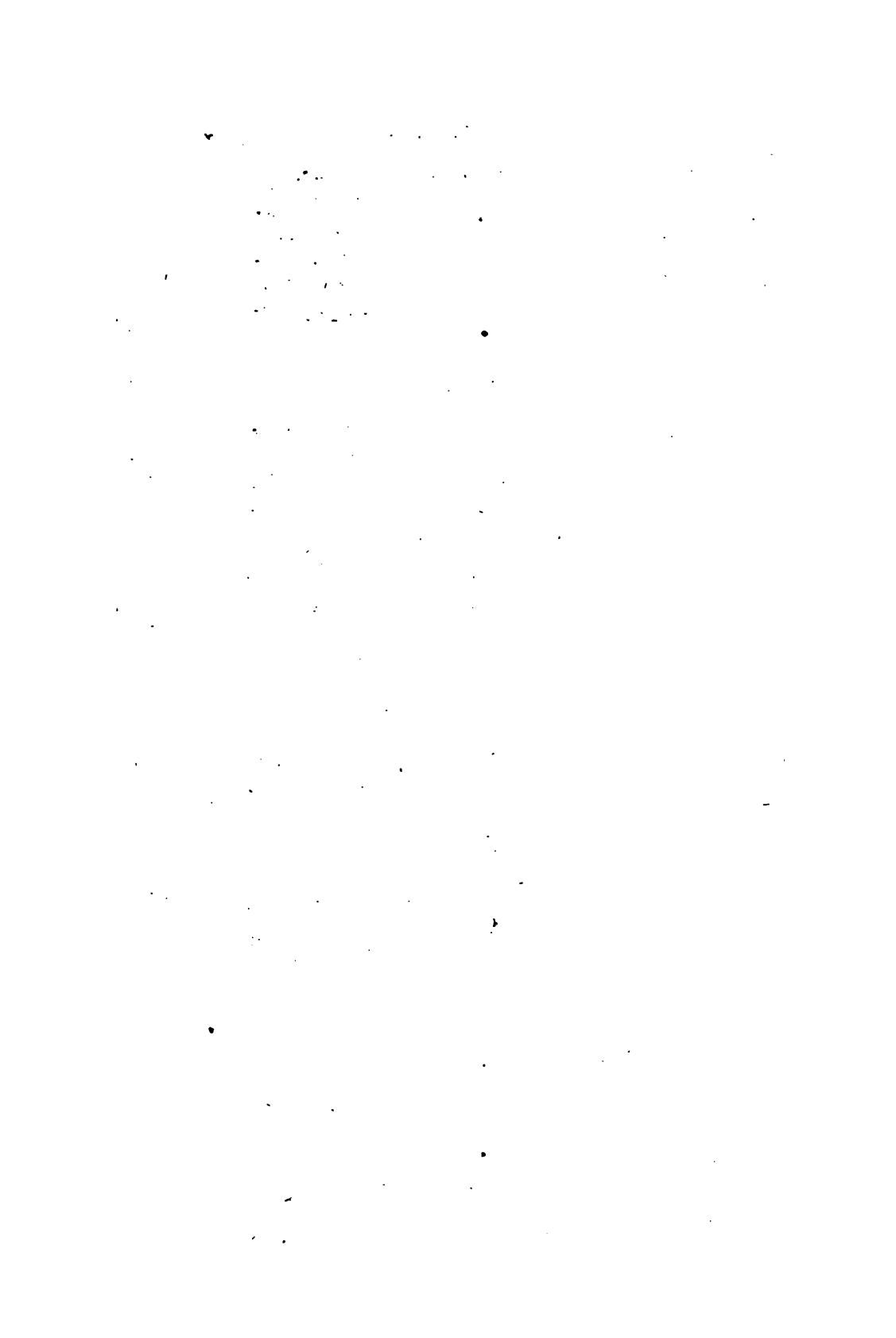
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T H E  
DIVINE LEGATION  
O F  
*M O S E S*  
D E M O N S T R A T E D.

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B O O K IV.

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S E C T. VI.

**I** COME, at length, to my second proposition: which if, by this time, the Reader should have forgotten, he may be easily excused. It is this, *That the Jewish people were extremely fond of Egyptian manners, and did frequently fall into Egyptian superstitions: and that many of the laws given to them by the ministry of Moses, were instituted, partly in compliance to their prejudices, and partly in opposition to those superstitions.*

The first part of this proposition,—*the people's fondness for, and frequent lapse into, Egyptian superstitions,*—needs not many words to evince. The thing, as we shall see hereafter, being so natural

in itself; and, as we shall now see, so fully recorded in holy Scripture.

THE time was now come for the deliverance of the chosen People from their Egyptian bondage: For now VICE and IDOLATRY were arrived at their height; the former (as St. Paul tells us) by means of the latter; for *as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, &c.*<sup>a</sup>. The two most populous regions at that time in the world were CANAAN and EGYPT: The first distinguished from all other by its *violence and unnatural crimes*; the latter by its *superstitions and idolatries*. It concerned God's moral government that a speedy check should be put to both; the inhabitants of these two places being now ripe for divine vengeance. And as the Instruments he employed to punish their present enormities were designed for a barrier against future, the Israelites went out of Egypt with a *big band*, which desolated their haughty tyrants; and were led into the possession of the land of Canaan, whose inhabitants they were utterly to exterminate. The dispensation of this Providence appears admirable, both in the time and in the modes of the punishment. VICE and IDOLATRY had now (as I said) filled up their measure. EGYPT, the capital of false Religion, being likewise the nursery of arts and sciences, was preserved from total destruction for the sake of civil life and polished manners, which were to derive their source from thence: But the CANAANITES were to be utterly exterminated, to vindicate the honour of humanity, and to put a stop

<sup>a</sup> Rom. i. 28.



to a spreading contagion which changed the reasonable Nature into brutal.

Now it was that GOD, remembering his Covenant with Abraham, was pleased to appoint his People, then groaning under their bondage, a Leader and Deliverer. But so great was their degeneracy, and so sensible was MOSES of its effects, in their ignorance of, or alienation from the true GOD, that he would willingly have declined the office: And when absolutely commanded to undertake it, he desired however that GOD would let him know by what NAME he would be called, when the people should ask the *name* of the GOD of their fathers.—*And Moses said unto GOD, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The GOD of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, WHAT IS HIS NAME? what shall I say unto them?*<sup>b</sup> Here we see a people not only lost to all knowledge of the UNITY, (for the asking for a *name* necessarily implied their opinion of a plurality) but likewise possessed with the very spirit of Egyptian idolatry. *The religion of NAMES*, as we have shewn<sup>c</sup>, was a matter of great consequence in Egypt. It was one of their essential superstitions: it was one of their native inventions: and the first of them which they communicated to the Greeks. Thus when Hagar, the handmaid of Sarai, who was an Egyptian woman, saw the angel of God in the wilderness, the text tells us<sup>d</sup>, *She called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, ELROI, the God of vision, or the visible God*: that is, according to the established custom of Egypt, she gave him a name of honour: not merely a name of distinc-

<sup>b</sup> EXOD. iii. 13.  
xvi. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Page 254, & seq.

<sup>d</sup> GEN.



tion; for such, all nations had (who worshiped local tutelary deities) before their communication with Egypt\*. But, after that, (as appears from the place of Herodotus quoted above, concerning the Pelasgi) they decorated their Gods with distinguished Titles, indicative of their specific office and attributes. A NAME was so peculiar an adjunct to a local tutelary Deity, that we see by a passage quoted by Lactantius from the spurious books of Trismegist, (which however abounded with Egyptian notions and superstitions) that the one supreme God had no *name* or title of distinction†. Zachariah evidently alluding to these notions, when he prophesies of the worship of the supreme God,

\* In the history of the acts of Hezekiah, king of Judah, it is said, that, “ He removed the high places, and brake the  
“ images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the  
“ brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the  
“ children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it  
“ NEHUSHTAN.” [2 KINGS xviii. 4.] The historian’s care to record the *name* which the king gave to the brazen serpent, when he passed sentence upon it, will appear odd to those who do not reflect upon what hath been said, about the superstition of NAMES. But that will shew us the propriety of the observation. This idol, like the rest, had doubtless, its *name of honour*, alluding to its sanative attributes. Good Hezekiah, therefore, in contempt of its title of deification, called it NEHUSHTAN, which signifies A THING OF BRASS. And it was not out of season either to nickname it then, or to convey the mockery to posterity: For the NAME of a demolished God, like the shade of a deceased Hero, still walked about, and was ready to prompt men to mischief.

† Hic scripsit libros — in quibus majestatem summi ac singularis dei asserit, iisdemque nominibus appellat, quibus nos, DEUM & PATREM. Ac ne quis NOMEN ejus requireret, ANONYMON esse dixit; eo quod nominis proprietate non egeat, ob ipsam scilicet unitatem. Ipsi hęc verba sunt, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς ἄν; ὁ δὲ ἄν; ἀνώνυμος ἢ ἀπροσδιόριστος; ἔτι γὰρ ὁ ἀνώνυμος. Deo igitur nomen non est, quia solus est: nec opus est proprio vocabulo, nisi cum discrimen exigit multitudo, ut unamquamque personam sua nota et appellatione designes. *Div. Inst.* l. i. c. 6.

unmixed

unmixed with idolatry, says, *In that day shall there be one Lord, and HIS NAME ONE*<sup>e</sup>; that is, only bearing the simple title of LORD: and, as in the words of Lactantius below, *ac ne quis NOMEN ejus requireret, ANΩNTYMON esse dixit; eo quod nominis PROPRIETATE non egeat, ob ipsam scilicet UNITATEM*. Out of indulgence therefore to this weakness, God was pleased to give himself a NAME. *And God said unto MOSES, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you*<sup>b</sup>. Where we may observe (according to the constant method of divine Wisdom, when it condescends to the prejudices of men) how, in the very instance of indulgence to their superstition, he gives a corrective of it. — The Religion of names arose from an idolatrous polytheism; and the NAME here given, implying eternity and self-existence, directly opposeth that superstition.

This compliance with the Religion of names was a new indulgence to the prejudices of this people, as is evident from the following words: *And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY, but by my NAME JEHOVAH was I not known to them*<sup>i</sup>. That is, as the God of Abraham, I before condescended to have a Name of distinction: but now, in compliance to another prejudice, I condescend to have a Name of honour. This seems to be the true interpretation of this very difficult text, about which the commentators are so much embarrassed. For the word *Jehovah*, whose name is here said to be unknown to the Patriarchs, frequently occur-

<sup>e</sup> Ch. xiv. ver. 9.

<sup>b</sup> EXOD. iii. 14.

<sup>i</sup> EXOD. vi. 3.



ing in the book of Genesis, had furnished Unbelievers with a pretext that the same person could not be author of the two books of Genesis and Exodus. But Ignorance and Scepticism, which set Infidelity on work, generally bring it to shame. They mistook the true sense of the text. The assertion is not, that the word *Jehovah* was not used in the patriarchal language; but that the NAME *Jehovah*, as a title of honour, (whereby a new idea was affixed to an old word) was unknown to them. Thus, in a parallel instance, we say rightly, that the King's SUPREMACY was unknown to the English Constitution till the time of Henry VIII. tho' the word was in use, and even applied to the chief Magistrate, (indeed in a different and more simple sense) long before.

The common solution of this difficulty is as ridiculous as it is false. You shall have it in the words of a very ingenious Writer.—“ The word “ JEHOVAH signifies the being unchangeable in his “ resolutions, and consequently the being infinitely “ faithful in performing his promises. In this “ sense, the word is employed in the passage of “ Exodus now under examination. So that “ when God says, *by my name Jehovah was I not “ known to them*, this signifies,—“ as one faithful “ to fullfil my promises, was I not known to them.” “ i. e. I had not then fullfilled the promise which “ I had made to them, of bringing their posterity “ out of Egypt, and giving them the land of Canaan<sup>k</sup>.” By which interpretation, the Almighty

<sup>k</sup> — il signifie *Petre immuable dans ses resolutions*, et par consequent *Petre infiniment fidelle dans ses promesses*, et c'est dans cette acception que ce nom est employé dans le passage de l'Exode, que nous examinons. Qu'ainsi quand Dieu dit, *Je*

mighty is made to tell the Israelites that he was not known to their forefathers as the God who had redeemed their posterity from Egypt, before they had any posterity to redeem. A marvellous revelation, and, without doubt, much wanted. To return.

MOSES however appears still unwilling to accept this Commission; and presumes to tell God, plainly, *Behold they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee*<sup>1</sup>. But could this be said or thought by a People, who, groaning in the bitterest servitude, had a message from God, of a long promised deliverance, at the very time that, according to the prediction, the promise was to be fulfilled, if they had kept him and his dispensations in memory? When this objection is removed, Moses hath yet another; and that is, his inability for the office of an ORATOR. This too is answered. And when he is now driven from all his subterfuges, he with much passion declines the whole employment, and cries out, *O my God, send I pray thee by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*<sup>m</sup>. This justly provokes God's displeasure: and thereon, he finally complies. From all this backwardness, (and the cause of it could be no other than what is here assigned; for MOSES, as appears by the former part of his history<sup>n</sup>, was

*ne leur ai point esté connu en mon nom de Jehovah, cela signifie, Je ne me suis point fait connoître, comme fidelle à remplir mes promesses, c'est à dire, JE N'AI PAS ENCORE REMPLI LA PROMISSE, qui je leur avois faite, de retirer de l'Egypte leur posterité, et de lui donner la terre de Chanaan. — M. Astruc. Conjectures sur le livre de la Genèse, p. 305. He says very truly, that, in this solution, he had no other part to perform, que suivre la foule des Commentateurs tant Chrétiens que Juifs. p. 301.*

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv. ver. 1.  
hap. ii. ver. 12.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. iv. ver. 3.

<sup>n</sup> Exod.

forward and zealous enough to promote the welfare of his brethren) we must needs conclude, that he thought the recovery of this People from EGYPTIAN SUPERSTITIONS to be altogether desperate. And, humanly speaking, he did not judge amiss; as may be seen from a succinct account of their behaviour during the whole time God was working this amazing Deliverance.

For now Moses and Aaron discharge their message; and having confirmed it by signs and wonders, the *People believed*: but it was such a belief, as men have of a new and unexpected matter, well attested.—*They bow the head too, and worship*<sup>o</sup>; but it appears to be a thing they had not been lately accustomed to. And how little true sense they had of God's promises and visitation is seen from their murmuring and desponding<sup>p</sup> when things did not immediately succeed to their wishes; though Moses, as from God, had told them before-hand, that Pharaoh would prove cruel and *hard-hearted*; and would defer their liberty to the very last distress<sup>q</sup>. And at length, when that time came, and God had ordered them to purify themselves from all the *idolatries* of EGYPT, so prodigiously attached were they to these follies, that they disobeyed his command even at the very eve of their deliverance<sup>r</sup>. A thing altogether incredible,

<sup>o</sup> EXOD. iv. 31.  
iii. ver. 19, 20, 21.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. v. ver. 21.

<sup>q</sup> Chap.

<sup>r</sup> A learned writer [Mr. Fourmont — *Reflexions Critiques sur les Histoires de anciens Peuples*] hath followed a system which very well accounts for this unconquerable propensity to Egyptian superstitions. He supposeth that the Egyptian, and consequently the Jewish idolatry, consisted in the worship of the dead Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c. The mischief

dible, but that we have God's own word for it, by the prophet Ezekiel: *In the day* (says he) *that I lifted up mine hand unto them to bring them forth of the land of Egypt, into a land that I had spied for them flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands: Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: Then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, amongst whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.*

is, that this should have the common luck of so many other learned Systems, to have all Antiquity obstinately bent against it. Not more so, however, than its Author is against Antiquity, as the reader may see by the instance I am about to give him. Mr. Fourmont, in consequence of his system, having taken it into his head, that Cronos, in Sanchoniatho, was ABRAHAM; notwithstanding that fragment tells us, that Cronos rebelled against his father, and cut off his privities; buried his brother alive, and murdered his own son and daughter; that he was an idolater; and a propagator of idolatry, by consecrating several of his own family; that he gave away the kingdom of Athens to the Goddess Athena; and the kingdom of Egypt to the God Taut; notwithstanding all this, so foreign and inconsistent with the history of Abraham, yet, because the same fragment says, that Cronos, in the time of a plague, sacrificed his only son to appease the shade of his murdered father; and circumcised himself and his whole army; on the strength of this, and two or three cold, fanciful etymologies, this great Critic cries out, *Nous qu'il s'agit ici du seul Abraham, c'est être AVEUGLE D'ESPRIT, ET D'UN AVEUGLEMENT IRRÉMEDIABLE.* Liv. ii. sect. 3. C. 3. —

Wherefore



*Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness\*.*

From all this it appears, that their Cry, *by reason of their bondage, which came up unto God*, was not for such a deliverance as was promised to their forefathers, to be *brought up out of Egypt*; but for such a one as might enable them to live at ease, amongst their *flesh-pots*, in it.

But now they are delivered: and, by a series of miracles performed in their behalf, got quite clear of the power of Pharaoh. Yet on every little distress, *Let us return to Egypt*, was still the cry. Thus, immediately after their deliverance at the Red-Sea, on so common an accident, as meeting with *bitter waters* in their rout, they were presently at their *What shall we drink?* And no sooner had a miracle removed this distress, and they gotten into the barren wilderness, but they were, again, at their *What shall we eat?* Not that indeed they feared to die either of hunger or of thirst; for they found the hand of God was still ready to supply their wants; all but their capital want, to return again into EGYPT; and these pretences were only a less indecent cover to their designs: which yet, on occasion, they were not ashamed to throw off, as where they say to Moses, when frightened by the pursuit of the Egyptians at the Red-Sea, *Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians\**. And again, *Would to God, we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots and did eat bread to the full†*. That is, in

\* EZEK. xx. 6. & seq.  
xvi. ver. 2.

† EXOD. xv, 24.

" Chap.

\* Chap. xiv, ver. 12.

† Exod. xvi. 3.



plain terms, "Would we had died with our brethren the Egyptians." For they here allude to the destruction of the first-born, when the destroying angel (which was more than they deserved) passed over the habitations of Israel.

But they have now both flesh and bread, when they cry out the second time for water: and even while, again, at their *Why hast thou brought us up out of Egypt*<sup>2</sup>, a rock, less impenetrable than their hearts, is made to pour out a stream so large that *the water run down like rivers*<sup>3</sup>: yet all the effect it seemed to have upon them was only to put them more in mind of *the way of Egypt, and the WATERS of Sibar*<sup>4</sup>.

Nay even after their receiving the LAW, on their free and solemn acceptance of *Jehovah* for their God and KING, and their being consecrated anew, as it were, for his peculiar People, Moses only happening to stay a little longer in the Mount than they expected, They fairly took the occasion of projecting a scheme, and, to say the truth, no bad one, of returning back into Egypt. They went to Aaron; and pretending they never hoped to see Moses again, desired another Leader. But they would have one in the mode of Egypt; an Image, or visible representative of God, *to go before them*<sup>5</sup>. Aaron complies, and makes them a GOLDEN CALF, in conformity to the superstition of Egypt; whose great God Osiris was worshiped under that representation<sup>6</sup>; and, for greater holiness too, out of the jewels of the Egyptians. In

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xvii. ver. 3.  
<sup>3</sup> Exod. xxxii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Jer.

<sup>6</sup> Ὁ ΜΟΙΣΧΟΣ ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἈΠΙΣ καλεῖται. Herodot. l. iii. 28.

this

this so horrid an impiety to the God of their fathers, their secret drift<sup>e</sup>; if we may believe St. Stephen, was this; they wanted to get back into Egypt; and while the CALF, so much adored in that country, went before them, they could return with an atonement and reconciliation in their hands. And doubtless their worthy Mediator, being made all of sacred, Egyptian metal, would have been consecrated in one of their temples, under the title of OSIRIS REDVCTOR. But Moses's sudden appearance broke all their measures; and the ringleaders of the design were punished as they deserved.

At length, after numberless follies and perversities, they are brought, through God's patience and long-suffering, to the end of all their travels, to the promised place of rest, which is just opening to receive them; When, on the report of the cowardly explorers of the Land, they relapse again into their old delirium, *Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt<sup>f</sup>.* This so provoked the Almighty, that he condemned that Generation to be worn away in the Wilderness. How they spent their time there, the prophet Amos will inform us, *Have ye offered unto me (says God) any sacrifices and offerings in the Wilderness, forty years, O house of Israel<sup>g</sup>?*

<sup>e</sup> — “To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us Gods to go before us,” &c. Acts vii. 39, 40.

<sup>f</sup> NUMB. xiv. 3, 4.

<sup>g</sup> AM. v. 25.

In

In a word, this unwillingness to leave Egypt, and this impatience to return thither, are convincing proofs of their fondness for its customs and superstitions. When I consider this, I seem more inclined than the generality even of sober Critics to excuse the false accounts of the Pagan writers concerning the Exodus; who concur in representing the Jews as expelled or forcibly driven out of Egypt; For so indeed they were. The mistake was only about their driver. The Pagans supposed him to be the King of Egypt; when indeed it was the God of Israel himself, by the ministry of Moses.

Let us view them next, in possession of the PROMISED LAND. A land *flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands*. One would expect now their longing after Egypt should have entirely ceased. And so without doubt it would, had it arose only from the *lesh-pots*; but it had a deeper root; it was the spiritual luxury of Egypt, their *superstitions*, with which the Israelites were so debauched. And therefore no wonder they should still continue slaves to their appetite. Thus the prophet Ezekiel, *Neither LEFT she her whoredoms brought from Egypt<sup>a</sup>*. So that after all God's mercies conferred upon them in putting them in possession of the land of Canaan, Joshua is, at last, forced to leave them with this fruitless admonition: *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and PUT AWAY the Gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood and in EGYPT<sup>b</sup>*. It is true, we are told that *the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord*

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xiii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Jos. xxiv. 14.

that he did for Israel<sup>k</sup>. But, out of sight out of mind. It is then added—*And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel—And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other Gods, of the Gods of the people that were round about them*<sup>l</sup>. And in this state they continued throughout the whole administration of their JUDGES; except, when, from time to time, they were awakened into repentance by the severity of God's judgments; which yet were no sooner pass'd, than they fell back again into their old lethargy, a forgetfulness of his mercies.

Nor did their fondness for Egypt at all abate when they came under the iron rod of their KINGS; the Magistrate they had so rebelliously demanded; and who, as they pretended, was to set all things right. On the contrary, this folly grew still more inflamed; and instead of one CALF they would have two. Which Ezekiel hints at, where he says, *Yet she MULTIPLIED her whoredoms in calling to remembrance the days of her youth wherein she had played the harlot in Egypt*<sup>m</sup>. And so favourite a superstition were the CALVES of Dan and Beth-el, that they still kept their ground against all those general Reforms which divers of their better sort of Kings had made, to purge the land of Israel from idolatries. It is true, their extreme fondness for Egyptian superstition was not the only cause of this inveterate adherence to their CALVES. There were two others:

They flattered themselves that this specific idolatry was not altogether so gross an affront to the

<sup>k</sup> JUDGES ii. 7.    <sup>l</sup> JUDGES ii. 10—12.    <sup>m</sup> EZEK. xxiii. 19.



GOD of their fathers as many of the rest. Other of their idolatries consisted in worshipping Strange Gods in conjunction with the GOD of Israel; this of the CALVES, only in worshipping the GOD of Israel in an idolatrous manner: as appears from the history of their erection. And Jeroboam<sup>a</sup> said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam King of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam King of Judah. Whereupon the King took counsel, and made two CALVES of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan<sup>c</sup>.—It is too much for you (says he) to go up to Jerusalem. Who were the men disposed to go up? None surely but the worshipers of the GOD of Israel. Consequently the CALVES, here offered to save them a journey, must needs be given as the representatives of that God. And if these were so, then certainly the CALF in Horeb: since, at their several consecrations, the very same proclamation was made of all three: Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

The other cause of the perpetual adherence of the Kingdom of Israel to their GOLDEN CALVES was their being erected for a prevention of reunion with the Kingdom of Judah. *If this people* (says

<sup>a</sup> It is to be observed of this Jeroboam, that he had sojourned in Egypt, as a refugee, during the latter part of the reign of Solomon, 1 KINGS xii. 40.

<sup>c</sup> 1 KINGS xii. 26. & seq.

the politic contriver) *go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah.* The succeeding kings, therefore, we may be sure, were as careful in preserving them, as He was in putting them up. So that, good or bad, the character common to them all was, that *he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin*; namely in worshipping the Calves in Dan and Beth-el. And those of them who appeared most zealous for the Law of God, and utterly exterminated the idolatry of Baal, yet connived at least, at this political worship of the CALVES.—*Thus Jebu destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin, Jebu departed not, to wit, the golden CALVES that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan*<sup>1</sup>.

But the Israelites had now contracted all the fashionable habits of Egypt. We are assured that it has been long peculiar to the Egyptian superstition for every city of that empire to have its own tutelary God, besides those which were worshiped in common: But now Jeremiah tells us the people of Judah bote a part with them in this extravagance: *Where are thy Gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: FOR ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THY CITIES, ARE THY GODS, O JUDAH*<sup>2</sup>.

And by the time that the sins of this wretched People were ripe for the punishment of their approaching Captivity, they had polluted themselves with all kind of *Egyptian abominations*: as appears

<sup>1</sup> 2 KINGS x. 28, & seq.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 28.

from

from the famous VISIONS OF EZEKIEL, where their three capital idolatries are so graphically described. The Prophet represents himself as brought, in a vision, to Jerusalem: and, at the door of the inner gate that looked towards the north, he saw the seat of the IMAGE OF JEALOUSY which provoketh to jealousy<sup>1</sup>. Here, by the noblest stretch of an inspired imagination, he calls this seat of their idolatries, the seat of the Image of Jealousy, whom he personifies, and the more to catch the attention of this corrupt people, converts into an Idol; THE IMAGE OF JEALOUSY which provoketh to jealousy, as if he had said, God, in his wrath, hath given you one idol more, to avenge himself of all the rest. After this sublime prelude, the prophet proceeds to the various scenery of the inspired Vision.

I. The first of their capital idolatries is described in this manner: *And he brought me to the door of the court, and when I looked, behold a HOLE IN THE WALL. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a DOOR. And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw, and behold EVERY FORM OF CREEPING THINGS, AND ABOMINABLE BEASTS, and all the idols of the house of Israel POURTRAYED UPON THE WALL ROUND ABOUT. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniab the son of Shaphan, with every man his censor in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do IN THE DARK, every man in the CHAMBERS OF HIS IMAGERY?*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> EZEK. viii. 3.<sup>2</sup> EZEK. viii. 6, & seq.



1. The first inference I draw from these words is, That the Superstition here described was EGYPTIAN. This appears from its objects being the Gods peculiar to Egypt: *every form of creeping things and abominable beasts*; which, in another place, the same prophet calls, with great propriety and elegance, the *abominations of the eyes* of the Israelites<sup>1</sup>.

2. The second inference is, That they contain a very lively and circumstantial description of the so celebrated MYSTERIES OF ISIS AND OSIRIS. For 1. The rites are represented as performed in a secret subterraneous place. *And when I looked, behold a HOLE in the wall; Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a DOOR. And he said unto me, Go in—Hast thou seen what the Ancients of the house of Israel do in the DARK?* This secret place was, as the Prophet tells us, in the Temple. And such kind of places, for this use, the Egyptians had in their Temples, as we learn from a similitude of Plutarch's: *Like the disposition* (says he) *and ordonance of their Temples; which, in one place, enlarge and extend themselves into long wings, and fair and open isles; in another, sink into dark and secret subterranean Vestries, like the Adyta of the Thebans*<sup>2</sup>: which Tacitus describes in these words—atque alibi angustiae, et profunda altitudo, nullis inquirentium spaciis pene-

<sup>1</sup> EZEK. XX. 7, 8. This shews brute-worship in Egypt to have been vastly extensive at the Exodus; the time the prophet is here speaking of.

<sup>2</sup> Ως ——— αἱ τῶν Ναῶν διαστάσεις, τῶν μὲν ἀνιμῶν εἰς πλεῖσθαι καὶ δρόμους ὑπεραιβρίους καὶ καθάρους, τῶν δὲ κρυφίων καὶ σκότους καὶ σὺν χόλῳ σολιτηρίας ὁρῶντων ἐκείνων. ——— Hist. IV. καὶ OS. p. 639. Steph. ed.

trabilis<sup>2</sup>." 2. These rites are celebrated by the SANHEDRIM, or the elders of *Israel*: *And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel.* Now it hath been shewn in the Account of the MYSTERIES, that none but princes, rulers, and the wisest of the people, were admitted to their more secret celebrations. 3. The paintings and imagery, on the walls of this subterraneous apartment, answer exactly to the descriptions the ancients have given us of the mystic cells of the Egyptians<sup>3</sup>. *Behold every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel pourtrayed upon the wall round about.* So Ammianus Marcellinus — "Sunt et syringes subterranei quidam et flexuosi secessus, quos, ut fertur, periti, rituum vetustorum — penitus operosis digestos fodinis, per loca diversa struxerunt: et extisis parietibus volucrum ferarumque genera multa sculpservnt, quas hieroglyphicas literas appellant<sup>4</sup>." There is a famous antique monument, once a consecrated utensil in the rites of Isis and Osiris, and now well known to the curious by the name of the ISIAC or BEMBEZ TABLES; on which (as appears by the order of the several compartments) is pourtrayed all the imagery that adorned the walls of the *Mystic Cell*. Now if one were to describe the engravings on that table, one could not find juster or more emphatic terms than those which the Prophet here employs.

<sup>2</sup> Ann. xi. c. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Thus described by a learned Antiquary, *Abyta Egyptiorum*, in quibus sacerdotes sacra operari, rituales et caeremonias suas exercere solebant, *subterranea loca erant*, singulari quodam artificio ita constructa, ut nihil non mysteriosum in eis occurreret. *Muri ex omni parte pleni tum hieroglyphicis picturis, tum sculpsuris* — Kircher.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. xii. c. 15.



3. The third inference I would draw from this vision is, that the Egyptian superstition was that to which the Israelites were more particularly addicted. And thus much I gather from the following words, *Behold every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and ALL THE IDOLS OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, portrayed upon the wall round about.* I have shewn this to be a description of an Egyptian mystic cell: which certainly was adorned only with Egyptian Gods: and yet those Gods are here called, by way of distinction, *all the idols of the house of Israel*: which seems plainly to infer this People's more particular addiction to them. But the words, *house of Israel*, being used in a vision describing the idolatries of the *house of Judah*, I take it for granted, that in this indefinite number of *All the idols of the house of Israel*, were eminently included those two prime idols of the *house of Israel*, the calves of Dan and Beth-el. And the rather, for that I find the original Calves held a distinguished station in the paintings of the Mystic Cell; as the reader may see by casting his eye upon the Bem-bine Table. And this, by the way, will lead us to the reason of Jeroboam's erecting two Calves. For they were, we see, worshiped in pairs by the Egyptians, as representing Isis and Osiris. And what is remarkable, the Calves were *male and female*, as appears from 2 Kings, c. x. ver. 29. compared with Hosea c. x. ver. 5. where in one place the masculine, and in the other the feminine term is employed. But tho' the Egyptian Gods are thus by way of eminence, called the *idols of the house of Israel*, yet other idols they had besides Egyptian; and of those good store, as we shall now see.

For this prophetic vision is employed in describing the three master-superstitions of this unhappy people,

people, the EGYPTIAN, the PERSIAN, and the PERSIAN.

II. The Egyptian we have seen. The PERSIAN follows in their words: *He said unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater demonstrations that they lie. Then he brought me to the gate of the Lord: and when I saw the women weeping for TAMAR?*

III. The PERSIAN identification is now delineated in this manner: *Then he said unto me, First thou shalt see this, O son of man? There cometh the death, and thou shalt see greater demonstrations that they lie. And he brought me into the house east of the Lord's house, and showed me the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, where women sit and women sit upon their backs, looking to the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, and their faces towards the east.*

1. It is to be observed, that when the Prophet is bid to turn from the Egyptian to the PERSIAN, he is then bid to turn towards the north, which was the direction of Persia when regard to Jerusalem: consequently, he being from Jerusalem, the direction of Egypt, will regard to the same place. And when, from thence, he is bid to turn into the inner court of the Lord's house, to see the Persian rites, this was not the direction of Persia. With such exactness is the representation of the whole Vision conducted.

\* Ezek. viii. 13, 14.

\* Ezek. viii. 15, 16.

2. Again, as the mysterious rites of Egypt are said, agreeably to their usage, to be held in secret, by their ELDERS AND RULERS only: so the Phenician rites, for the same reason, are shewn as they were celebrated by the PEOPLE, in open day. And the Persian worship of the sun, which was performed by the Magi, is here said to be observed by the PRIESTS alone, *five and twenty men with their faces towards the east.*

These three capital Superstitions, the Prophet, again, distinctly objects to them, in a following chapter. *Thou hast also committed fornication with the EGYPTIANS thy neighbours, great of flesh<sup>c</sup>; and hast increased thy whoredoms to provoke me to anger. Thou hast played the whore also with the ASSYRIANS, because thou wast unsatiable: yea thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldst not be satisfied. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of CANAAN unto Chaldea, and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith<sup>d</sup>.*

And when that miserable Remnant, who, on the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, had escaped the fate of their enslaved countrymen, were promised safety and security, if they would stay in Judea; they said, *No, but we will go into the land*

<sup>c</sup> Fornication, adultery, whoredom, are the constant figures under which the Holy Spirit represents the idolatries of the Israelites: consequently, by this character of the Egyptians being great of flesh, and in another place, that their flesh was as the flesh of asses, and their issue like the issue of horses, EZEK. xxiii. 20. we are given to understand that Egypt was the grand origin and incentive of idolatry, and the propagator of it amongst the rest of mankind: which greatly confirms our general position concerning the antiquity of this Empire.

<sup>d</sup> EZEK. xvi. 26, & seq.



*of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell\*.*

Thus we see what a surprising fondness this infatuated people had for Egypt, and how entirely they were seized and possessed with its superstitions. Which the more I consider, the more I am confirmed in the truth of Scripture-history, (so opposite to Sir Isaac Newton's Egyptian Chronology) that Egypt was, at the egression of the Israelites, a great and powerful empire. For nothing so much attaches a people to any particular Constitution, or mode of Government, as the high opinion of its power, wealth, and felicity; these being ever supposed the joint product of its RELIGION and CIVIL POLICY.

II. Having thus proved the first part of the Proposition, *That the Jewish people were extremely fond of Egyptian manners, and did frequently fall into Egyptian superstitions*, I come now to the second; *That many of the Laws given to them by the ministry of Moses were instituted partly in compliance to their prejudices, and partly in opposition to those and to the like superstitions.* But to set what I have to say in support of this second part of the Proposition in a fair light, it may be proper just to state and explain the ENDS of the Ritual Law. Its first and principal, was to guard the chosen people from the contagion of IDOLATRY: a second, and very important end, was to prepare them for the reception of the MESSIAH. The first required that the Ritual Law should be OBJECTIVE to the Pagan superstitions; and the second, that it should be

\* JEREM. xlii. 24.

TYPICAL of their great Deliverer. Now the coincidences of these two ends, not being sufficiently adverted to, hath been the principal occasion of that obstinate aversion to the truth here advanced, *That much of the Ritual was given, PARTLY in compliance to the People's prejudices, and PARTLY in opposition to Egyptian superstitions*: These men thinking the falshood of the Proposition sufficiently proved in shewing the Ritual to be *typical*; as if the one end excluded the other: whereas we see they were very consistent; and hereafter shall see, that their concurrency affords one of the noblest proofs of the divinity of its original.

And now, to go on with our subject: The intelligent reader cannot but perceive, that the giving a RITUAL in opposition to Egyptian superstition, was a necessary consequence of the People's propensity towards it. For a people so prejudiced, and who were to be dealt with as free and accountable Agents, could not possibly be kept separate from other nations, and pure from foreign idolatries, any otherwise than by giving them laws IN OPPOSITION to those superstitions. But such being the corrupt state of man's Will as ever to revolt against what directly opposeth its prejudices, wise Governors, when under the necessity of giving such Laws, have, in order to break and evade the force of human perversity, always intermixed them with others which eluded the perversity, by flattering the prejudice; where the indulgence could not be so abused as to occasion the evil which the *laws of opposition* were designed to prevent<sup>f</sup>. And in this manner it was that our inspired Lawgiver acted with

<sup>f</sup> See this reasoning inforced, and explained more at large in the proof of the next proposition.



his people, if we will believe JESUS himself, where speaking of a certain positive institution, he says, *Moses for the HARDNESS OF YOUR HEARTS wrote you this precept*<sup>a</sup>. Plainly intimating their manners to be such, that, had not Moses indulged them in some things, they would have revolted against all<sup>b</sup>. It follows therefore, that Moses's giving Laws to the Israelites, *in compliance* to these their prejudices, was a natural and necessary consequence of Laws given *in opposition* to them. Thus far from the nature of the thing.

Matter of fact confirms this reasoning. We find in the Law a surprizing relation and resemblance between Jewish and Egyptian rites, in circumstances both *opposite* and *similar*. But the learned SPENCER hath fully exhausted this subject, in his excellent work, *De legibus Hebræorum ritualibus & earum rationibus*; and thereby done great service to divine revelation: For the RITUAL LAW, when thus explained, is seen to be an Institution of the most beautiful and sublime contrivance. Which, without its CAUSES, (no where to be found but in the road of this theory) must lie for ever open to the scorn and contempt of Libertines and Unbelievers. This noble work is no other than a paraphrase and comment on the third part of a famous treatise called *More Nevochim*, of the Rabbi MOSES MAIMONIDES: of whom only to say (as is his common Encomium) that *he was the first of the Rabbins who left off trifling*, is a poor

<sup>a</sup> MARK x. 5. and MAT. xix. 8.

<sup>b</sup> This is still farther seen from God's being pleased to be considered by them as a *local tutelary Deity*: which, when we come to that point, we shall shew, was the prevailing superstition of those times.



and invidious commendation. Thither I refer the impartial reader; relying on his justice to believe that I mean to charge myself with no more of Spencer's opinions than what directly tend to the proof of this part of my Proposition, by shewing That there is a great and surprizing relation and resemblance between the Jewish and Egyptian rites, in circumstances both *opposite* and *similar*.

I ask nothing unreasonable of the reader, when I desire him to admit of this as proved; since the learned HERMAN WITSIUS in a book professedly written to confute the hypothesis of Maimonides and Spencer, confesses the fact in the fullest and amplest manner<sup>1</sup>.

What is it then (a stranger to Controversy would be apt to inquire) which this learned man addresses himself, in a large quarto volume, to confute? It is the plain and natural consequence of this resemblance, namely, That *the Jewish Ritual was given partly in compliance to the People's prejudices, and*

<sup>1</sup> Ita autem commodissime me processurum existimo, si primo longa exemplorum inductione ex doctissimorum virorum mente, et eorum plerumque verbis, demonstravero, MAGNAM ATQUE MIRANDAM PLANE CONVENIENTIAM IN RELIGIONIS NEGOTIO VETERES INTER ÆGYPTIOS ATQUE HEBRÆOS ESSE. Quæ cum fortuita esse non possit, necesse est ut vel Ægyptii sua ab Hebræis, vel ex adverso Hebræi sua ab Ægyptiis habeant. And again, Porro, si, levato antiquitatis obscurioris velo, gentium omnium ritus oculis vigilantibus intueamur, Ægyptios & Hebræos, PRÆ OMNIBUS ALIIS MORIBUS SIMILLIMOS fuisse comperiemus. Neque hoc Kircherum fefellit, cujus hæc sunt verba: Hebræi tantam habent ad ritus, sacrificia, cærimonias, sacras disciplinas Ægyptiorum affinitatem, ut vel Ægyptios hebraizantes, vel Hebræos ægyptizantes fuisse, plane mihi persuadeam.—Sed quid verbis opus est? in rem præsentem veniamus, [Ægyptiaca, p. 4.] And so he goes on to transcribe, from Spencer and Marsham, all the eminent particulars of that resemblance.

partly

*partly in opposition to Egyptian superstitions; the Proposition we undertake to prove. Witſius thinks, or is rather willing to think, that the Egyptian Ritual was invented in imitation of the Jewish. For the reader ſees, that both ſides are agreed in this, That either the Jews borrowed from the Egyptians, or the Egyptians from the Jews; ſo ſtrong is the reſemblance which forces this confeſſion from them.*

Now, the only plauſible ſupport of Witſius's party being a thing taken for granted, viz. that the rites and cuſtoms of the Egyptians as delivered by the Greeks, were of much later original than theſe writers aſſign to them; and my diſcourſe on the ANTIQUITIES OF EGYPT, in the preceding ſection, proving it to be entirely groundleſs, the latter part of the propoſition, viz. *That many of the laws given to the Jews, by the miniſtry of Moſes, were inſtituted partly in compliance to their prejudices, and partly in oppoſition to Egyptian ſuperſtitious,* is ſufficiently proved.

But to let nothing that hath the appearance of an argument remain unanſwered, I ſhall, in as few words as may be, examine this opinion, *That the Egyptians borrowed from the Iſraelites;* regarding both Nations in that very light in which holy Scripture hath placed them. The periods then in which this muſt needs be ſuppoſed to have happened, are one or other of theſe. 1. The time of Abraham's reſidence in Egypt. 2.—of Joſeph's government. 3.—of the ſlavery of his, and his brethren's deſcendants: or 4. Any indefinite time after their egreſſion from Egypt.

Now not to inſiſt on the utter improbability of a potent nation's borrowing its religious Rites from



Thus, tho' Moses enjoined CIRCUMCISION, he hath been careful to record the patriarchal institution of it with all its circumstances — *Moses gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers) says JESUS*<sup>1</sup>. So again, where he institutes

but I suppose not designedly, because it seems a mere inaccuracy. The words are these: *They thought* [i. e. Dr. Spencer and others] *that God was pleased to institute the one in imitation of the others.* Now this neither Dr. Spencer nor any believer ever thought. They might indeed suppose that he *instituted one in reference to the other*, i. e. that part of its Rites were in direct opposition to the customs of the idolaters; and part, out of regard to the people's prejudices, in conformity to such of their customs as could not be abused to superstition. But this is a very different thing from *instituting one religion in imitation of another.* As no believer could suppose GOD did this; so neither, I will add, could any unbeliever. For this opinion, *That the jewish religion was instituted in imitation of the heathen,* is what induces the unbeliever to conclude, that GOD was not its author.

<sup>1</sup> JOHN vii. 22. The parenthesis seems odd enough. It may not therefore be unseasonable to explain the admirable reasoning of our divine Master on this occasion. JESUS, being charged by the Jews as a transgressor of the law of Moses, for having cured a man on the sabbath-day, thus expostulates with his accusers. "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the Fathers, [*ἐξ ὧν ἐκ τῶν πατέρων*, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν πατέρων] and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?" That is, "Moses enjoined you to observe the Rite of Circumcision, and to perform it on the eighth day: but if this day happen to be on the sabbath, you interrupt its holy rest by performing the Rite upon this day, because you will not break the law of Moses, which marked out a day certain for this work of charity. Are you therefore angry at me for performing a work of equal charity on the sabbath-day? But you will ask, why was it so ordered by the Law, that either the precept for Circumcision, or that for the sabbatical-rest, must needs be frequently transgressed. I answer, that tho' Moses, as I said, gave you Circumcision, yet the Rite was not originally

tutes the Jewish sabbath of rest, he records the patriarchal observance of it, in these words:—*In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, &c. and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it<sup>m</sup>.*

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originally of Moses, but of the Fathers. Now the Fathers enjoined it to be performed on the eighth day; Moses enjoined the seventh day should be a day of rest; consequently the day of rest and the day of Circumcision must needs frequently fall together. Moses found Circumcision instituted by a previous covenant which his law could not disannul\*. But had he originally instituted both, 'tis probable he would have contrived that the two Laws should not have interfered."—This I take to be the sense of that very important parenthesis, *not because it is of Moses, but of the Fathers.*

<sup>m</sup> Exod. chap. xx. ver. 11. — No one ever yet mistook Circumcision for a natural duty; while it has been esteemed a kind of impiety to deny the sabbath to be in that number. There are two circumstances attending this latter institution, which have misled the Sabbatarians in judging of its nature.

1. The first is, *that* which this positive institution and a natural duty hold in common, namely, the setting apart a certain portion of our time for the service of Religion. — Natural reason tells us, that that Being, who gave us all, requires a constant expression of our gratitude for the blessings he has bestowed, which cannot be paid without some expence of time: and this time must first be set apart before it can be used. But things of very different natures, may hold some things in common.

2. The second circumstance is this, that Moses, the better to impress upon the minds of his People the observance of the sabbath, acquaints them with the early institution of it; that it was enjoined by God himself, on his finishing the work of creation. But these Sabbatarians do not consider, that it is not the time when a command was given, nor even the author who gave it, that discover the class to which it belongs, but its nature as discoverable by human reason. And the sabbath is as much a positive institution when given by God to Adam and his posterity, as when given by Moses, the messenger of God,

\* See GAL. iii. 17.



The last period then only remains to be considered, namely, from the Egression. Now at that

to the Israelites and to their posterity. To judge otherwise, is reducing all God's commands to one and the same species.

Having thus far cleared the way, I proceed to shew that the Jewish sabbath is a mere positive institution,

1. From the account the Prophet Ezekiel gives of it — *Moreover also I gave them my sabbath, to be a sign between me and them* \*. A sign of what? A sign of a covenant. And so was circumcision called by God himself — *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token [or sign] of the covenant between me, and you †*. Now nothing but a Rite by institution of a POSITIVE LAW, could serve for a sign or token of a covenant between God and a particular selected People; for besides it's use for a remembrance of the covenant, it was to serve them as a partition-wall to separate them from other nations: And this a Rite by positive institution might well do, tho' used before by some other people, or even borrowed from them. But a natural duty has no capacity of being thus employed: because a practice observed by all nations, would obliterate every tract of a sign or token of a covenant made with one. Indeed, where the Covenant is with the whole race of mankind, and so, the sign of the covenant is to serve only for a remembrance, there, the sign may be either a moral duty or a natural phenomenon. This latter was the case in God's promise or covenant, not to destroy the earth any more by water. Here the Almighty, with equal marks of wisdom, made a natural and beautiful phenomenon, seen over the whole habitable earth, the token of that covenant. *And God said, This is the token of the covenant. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a Covenant between me and the earth; GEN. ix. 12, 13.* Yet it is wonderful to consider how this matter has been mistaken. Perhaps the word, *set*, did not a little contribute to it: the expression being understood absolutely; when it should have been taken in the relative sense, of *set for a token*. And in this sense, and only in this sense, the bow was then first set in the cloud. However, Dr. Burnet of the Charterhouse, who had a visionary theory to support, which made it necessary for him to maintain

\* Chap. xx. ver. 12.

† GEN. chap. xvii. ver. 11.  
that

that time and from thence-forward, we say, the Egyptians would not borrow of the Israelites, for these

that the phenomenon of the Rain-bow did not exist before the flood, endeavours to countenance that fancy from the passage above, by such a kind of reasoning as this, "That, had there been a Rain-bow before the flood, it could not have been properly used as a *token of God's Covenant*, that he would no more drown the earth, because, being a common appearance, it would give no extraordinary assurance of security." And to this reasoning Tindal, the author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, alludes, *Perhaps* (says he) *the not knowing the natural cause of the rain-bow, occasioned that account we have in Genesis of its institution*, page 228, 229. Its institution! The expression is excellent. God's appointing the rain-bow to be a *token or memorial, for perpetual generations*, of his covenant with mankind, is called, *his institution of the rain-bow*. But ill expression is the homage to nonsense, for the privilege of Free-thinking. However, his words shew, he took it for granted that Moses represents God as then *first setting his bow in the clouds*. And it is the reasoning which we are at present concerned with. Now this, we say, is founded in gross ignorance of the nature of *simple compacts and promises*; in which, the *only security* for performance is the known good faith of the Promiser. But, in the case before us, the most novel or most supernatural appearance could add nothing to their assurance, which arose from the evidence of God's veracity. As, on the contrary, had the children of Noah been ignorant of this attribute of the Deity, such an extraordinary phenomenon could have given no assurance at all. For what then served the rain-bow? For the wise purpose so well expressed by the sacred writer, for *THE TOKEN OF THE COVENANT*. That is, for a memorial or remembrance of it throughout all generations. A method of universal practice in the contracts of all civilized nations. Indeed, had this remnant of the human race been made acquainted with God's Covenant or promise by a third person, and in a common way, there had then been occasion to accompany it with some extraordinary or supernatural appearance. But for what? Not to give credit to God's veracity; but to the veracity of the messenger who brought his Will. Now God revealed this promise *immediately* to the children of Noah. But here lies the mistake: Our Deists have put themselves in the place of those Patriarchs, when a much lower belonged to them; and, the promise being revealed to them only by a third hand, and in a common way, they refuse to believe it, because not accompanied with a miracle. In the mean time they forget the condition of the Patriarchs when this covenant



these two plain and convincing reasons. 1. They held the Israelites in the greatest contempt, and abhor-

was made with them; filled with terror and astonishment at the past, and with the most disquieting apprehensions of a future Deluge, they needed some superior assurance to allay their fears. Had not that been the case, a particular Covenant had not been made with them; and had their posterity all along continued in the same condition, we may certainly conclude, from the uniformity of God's dealings with mankind, that he would, from time to time, have renewed this Covenant, in the way it was first given; or have secured the truth of the tradition by a supernatural appearance. But those fears soon wore out: and Posterity, in a little time, became no more concerned in this particular promise, than in all the other instances of divine goodness to mankind. But *Moses*, as this great philosopher concludes, *had no knowledge of the natural cause of the rainbow*. It may be so: because I know of no use that knowledge would have been to his Mission. But he was acquainted with the *moral cause*, and the *effects* too, of COVENANTS, which was more to the purpose of his office and character; and which this freethinking DOCTOR OF LAWS should not have been so ignorant of.

2. But secondly, if the Jewish Prophets can not convince our Sabbatarians, that the mosaic day of rest was a *positive institution*; yet methinks the express words of Jesus might, who told the Sabbatarians of that time, the Pharisees, That *the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*. Mark 11. 27. Now were the observation of the Sabbath a natural duty, it is certain, *man was made for the Sabbath*, the end of his creation being for the observance of the MORAL LAW, — the worship of the Deity, Temperance and Justice: nor can we by natural light conceive any other end. On the contrary, all positive institutions, *were made for man*, for the better direction of his conduct in certain situations of life; the observance of which is therefore to be regulated on the end for which they were instituted: for (contrary to the nature of moral duties) the observance of them may, in some circumstances, become hurtful to man, for whose benefit they were instituted; and whenever this is the case, God and nature grant a dispensation.

3. Thirdly, the primitive Christians, on the authority of this plain declaration of their blessed Master, treated the Sabbath as a positive Law, by changing the day dedicated to the service of Religion



abhorrence, as SHEPHERDS, SLAVES, and ENEMIES, men who had brought a total devastation on their Country: and had embraced a Religion whose Ritual daily treated the Gods of Ægypt with the utmost ignominy and despite<sup>1</sup>. But people never borrow their religious Rites from those towards whom they stand in such inveterate distance. 2. It was part of the Religion of the old Egyptians to borrow from none<sup>m</sup>: most certainly, not from the Jews. This is the account we have, of their natural disposition, from those Ancients who have treated of their manners. While, on the other hand, we are assured from infallible authority that the Israelites, of the time of Moses, were in the very extreme of a contrary humour, and were for BORROWING all they could lay their hands on. This is so notorious, that I was surpris'd to find the learned Witfius attempt to prove, that the *Egyptians were greatly inclined to borrowing*<sup>n</sup>: but much more

Religion from the seventh to the first day, and thus abolished one positive Law, THE SABBATH instituted in memory of the Creation, and, by the authority of the Church, erected another, properly called THE LORD'S DAY, in memory of the Redemption.

<sup>1</sup> See Spencer, *De Leg. Heb. Rit.* vol. i. p. 296.

<sup>m</sup> — *Ægyptii detestari videntur quicquid oī γονίης ἢ παρὸντες, parentes non commonstrarunt*, Witfii *Ægyptiaca*, p. 6. — Παλαιοὶ δὲ χεῖρῶν τοῖς νόμοις, ἄλλοι ἕτερα ἐπικλέωνται τοῖς. *Herodot.* l. ii. c. 78. — Ἑλληνοὶ δὲ νομάοις φύγῃσι κρᾶσθαι τὰ δὲ σύμπαν ἐπιπῶν, μὴ δ' ἈΛΛΩΝ ΜΗΔΑΜΑ ΜΗΔΑΜΩΝ ἀνθρώπων νομάοις: εἰ μὲν οὐ ἀλλὰ Αἰγύπτῳ ἔτω τὸ τοῦτο φυλάσσειν. c. 91.

<sup>n</sup> His words are these: *Magna quidem laterum contentione reclamatur Doctissimus Spencerus, prorsusque incredibile esse contendit. considerato gentis utriusque genio, ut ab Hebræis Ægyptii in suam tam multa religionem adsciverint. At quod ipsi incredibile videtur, id mihi, post aliq̃ eruditione atque judicio clarissimos, perquam*  
D 2 *probabile*

more surpris'd with his arguments; which are these.

1. Clemens Alex. says, that it was the custom of the Barbarians, and particularly the Egyptians, to honour their legislators and benefactors as Gods.
2. Diodorus Siculus confirms this account, where he says, that the Egyptians were the most grateful of all mankind to their benefactors. And
3. The same historian tells us, that when Egypt was become a province to Persia, the Egyptians deified Darius, while yet alive; which honour they never had done to any other king°.—This is the whole of his evidence to prove the Egyptian genius so greatly inclined to foreign Rites. Nor should I have expos'd the nakedness of this learned and honest man, either in this place or in any other, but for the use which hath been made of his authority; of which more hereafter. But Witsius, and those in his way of thinking, when they talk of the Egyptians' borrowing Hebrew rites, seem

*probabile est: IPSO ÆGYPTIORUM ID SUADENTE GENIO. In eo quippe præstantissimi Auctores consentiunt, solitos fuisse Ægyptios maximâ eos existimatione prosequi, quos sapientia atque virtute excellentiores cernerent, & a quibus se ingentibus beneficiis affectos esse meminissent: adeo quidem ut ejusmodi mortales, non de-functos solum, sed & supersites, pro Diis haberent. Lib. iii. c. 12. p. 262.*

° Clemens Alexandrinus clarum esse dicit, Barbaros eximie semper honorasse suos legumlatores & præceptores Deos ipsos appellantes. — Inter Barbaros autem cum maxime id præstiterint Ægyptii. Qui etiam genus Ægyptium diligentissime illos in Deos reulit. Assentitur Diodorus; Ægyptios denique supra cæteros Mortales quicquid bene de ipsis meretur grata mente prosequi affirmant. — Neque popularibus modo suis atque indigenis — sed Peregrinis — Facit huc Darii Persarum regis exemplum, quod Diodori iterum verbis exponam. Tandem Darii legibus Ægyptiorum animum appulisse dicitur — Nam cum Sacerdotibus Ægypti familiaritatem iniiit, &c. — Propterea tantum honoris consecutus est, ut supersites adhuc Divi appellationem quod nulli regum aliorum contigit, promeruerit. Lib. iii. c. 12. p. 253.



to have entertained a wrong idea of that highly policed People. It was not in ancient Egypt, as in ancient Greece, where every private man, who had travelled for it, found himself at liberty to set up what *lying vanity* he pleased. For in that wary Monarchy, Religion was in the hand of the magistrate, and under the inspection of the Public: so that no *private* novelties could be introduced, had the people been as much disposed, as they were indeed averse, to innovations; and that any *public* ones would be made, by rites borrowed from the Hebrews, is, as we have shewn above, highly improbable.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to discredit this proposition, (*that the Egyptians borrowed of the Israelites*) from the nature of the thing. I shall now shew the falshood of it, from the infallible testimony of God himself: who upbraiding the Israelites with their borrowing idolatrous Rites of all their neighbours, expresses himself in this manner, by the prophet Ezekiel: *The contrary is in thee from other Women, WHEREAS NONE FOLLOWETH THEE TO COMMIT WHOREDOMS: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given to thee, therefore thou art contrary*<sup>p</sup>. The intelligent reader perceives that the plain meaning of the metaphor is this, *Ye Jews are contrary to all other nations: you are fond of borrowing their Rites, while none of them care to borrow yours.* But this remarkable fact, had it not been so expressly delivered, might easily have been collected from the whole course of sacred history. The reason will be accounted for hereafter. At present I shall only need to observe, that by the words, *Whereas none fol-*

<sup>p</sup> EZEK. xvi. 34.

*loweth thee to commit whoredoms*, is not meant, that no particular Gentile ever embraced the Jewish religion; but, that no Gentile people took in any of its Rites into their own national Worship. That this is the true sense of the passage, appears from hence, 1. The idolatry of the COMMUNITY of Israel is here spoken of: and this, as will be shewn in the next book, did not consist in renouncing the Religion of Moses, but in polluting it with idolatrous mixtures. 2. The embracing the Jewish religion, and renouncing idolatry could not, in figurative propriety, be called *committing whoredom*, tho' polluting the Jewish Rites, by taking them into their own superstitions, gives elegance to the figure thus applied.

The Reader, perhaps, may wonder how men can stand out against such kind of evidence. It is not, I will assure him, from the abundance of argument on the other side; or from their not seeing the force on this; but from a pious, and therefore very excusable, apprehension of danger to the Divinity of the Law, if it should be once granted that any of the Ceremonial part was given *in compliance to the people's prejudices*. Of which imaginary danger lord Bolingbroke hath availed himself, to calumniate the Law, for a COMPLIANCE too evident to be denied.

The apprehension therefore of this consequence being that which makes Believers so unwilling to own, and Deists, against the very genius of their infidelity, so ready to embrace an evident truth; I seem to come in opportunely to set both parties right: while I shew, in support of my THIRD PROPOSITION, that the consequence is groundless; and that the fears and hopes built upon this supposed *compliance*,



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*compliance, are vain and fantastical; which I venture to predict, will ever be the issue of such fears and hopes as arise only from the Religionist's honest adherence to common sense and to the word of God.*

II.

OUR THIRD PROPOSITION is, That *Moses's Egyptian learning, and the Laws he instituted in compliance to the People's prejudices, and in opposition to Egyptian superstitions, are no reasonable objection to the divinity of his mission.*

The first part of the Proposition concerns *Moses's Egyptian wisdom*. Let us previously consider what that was. MOSES (says the holy martyr Stephen) WAS LEARNED IN ALL THE WISDOM OF THE EGYPTIANS, *and mighty in words and deeds* <sup>p</sup>. Now where the wisdom of a Nation is spoken of, that which is characteristic of the Nation must needs be meant: where the *wisdom* of a particular man, that which is peculiar to his quality and profession. St. Stephen, in this place, speaks of both. In both, therefore, he must needs mean CIVIL or POLITICAL wisdom; because, for that (as we have shewn) the Egyptian nation was principally distinguished: and in that, consisted the eminence of character of one who had a royal adoption, was bred up at court, and became at length the Leader and Lawgiver of a numerous People. More than this,—St. Stephen is here speaking of him under this public character, and therefore he must be necessarily understood to mean, that *Moses was consummate in the science of Legislation*. The words indeed are, *ALL the learning of the Egyptians*.

<sup>p</sup> Acts vii. 22.

But every good logician knows, that where the thing spoken of refers to some particular use (as here, Moses's LEARNING, to his CONDUCTING the Israelites out of Egypt) the particle ALL does not mean *all of every kind*, but *all the parts of one kind*. In this restrained sense, it is frequently used in the sacred Writings. Thus, in the Gospel of St. John, JESUS says, *When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into ALL truth*'. But further, the concluding part of the character, — *and mighty in WORDS and DEEDS*, will not easily suffer the foregoing part to admit of any other interpretation; ἦν δὲ δυνατὸς ἐν ΛΟΓΟΙΣ καὶ ἐν ΕΡΓΟΙΣ. This was the precise character of the ANCIENT CHIEF: who leading a free and willing People, needed the arts of peace, such as PERSUASION and LAW-MAKING, the ΛΟΓΟΙ; and the arts of war, such as CONDUCT and COURAGE, the ΕΡΓΑ in the text. Hence it is, that Jesus, who was *The prophet like unto Moses*, the Legislator of the *new* covenant as the other was of the *old*, and the Conductor of our spiritual warfare, is characterised in the same words, δυνατὸς ἐν ΕΡΓῳ καὶ ΛΟΓῳ ἐναντίον τοῦ ΘΕΟΥ καὶ πάντως τῷ λαῷ. — *A prophet, mighty in DEED and WORD, before GOD and all the PEOPLE*. This *wisdom*, therefore, in which Moses was said to be so versed, we conclude was the τὸ πραγματικὸν τῆς φιλοσοφίας, in contradistinction to the τὸ θεωρητικόν. Hence may be seen the impertinence of those long inquiries, which, on occasion of these words, men have run into, concerning the state of the speculative and mechanic arts of Egypt, at this period.

This being the wisdom, for which Moses is here celebrated, the Deist hastily concluded, *that there-*

† JOHN xvi. 13.

\* LUKE xxiv. 19.



*fore the establishment of the Jewish Policy was the sole contrivance of Moses himself: He did not reflect, that a fundamental truth (which, he will not venture to dispute any more than the Believer) stands very much in the way of his conclusion; namely, That God, in the moral government of the world, never does that in an extraordinary way which can be equally well effected in an ordinary.*

In the Separation of the Israelites, a civil Policy and a national Religion were to be established, and incorporated with one another, by God himself. For that end, he appointed an under-agent, or instrument: who, in this work of Legislation, was either to understand the government of a People, and so, be capable of comprehending the general plan delivered to him by God, for the erection of this extraordinary Policy: or else he was not to understand the government of a People, and so, God himself, in the execution of his plan, was, at every step, to interfere, and direct the ignorance and inability of his Agent. Now, as this perpetual interposition might be spared by the choice of an able Leader, we conclude, on the maxim laid down, that God would certainly employ such an one in the execution of his purpose.

There was yet another, and that no slight expediency, in such a Leader. The Israelites were a stubborn People, now first forming into Civil government; greatly licentious; and the more so, for their just coming out of a state of slavery. Had Moses therefore been so unequal to his designation, as to need God's direction at every turn, to set him right, he would soon have lost the authority requisite for keeping an unruly multitude in awe; and have sunk into such contempt  
amongst

amongst them, as must have retarded their designed establishment.

But it will be said, "if there wanted so able a Chief at the first setting up of a THEOCRACY, there would still be the same want, though not in an equal degree, during the whole continuance of that divine form of government." It is likely there would, because I find, God did make a proper provision for it; first in the erection of the SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS: and afterwards, in the establishment of the GREAT SANHEDRIM, which succeeded them. But sacred history mentioning these *Schools of the prophets*, and the assembly of the *Seventy elders*, only occasionally, the accounts we have of both are very short and imperfect. Which is the reason why interpreters, who have not well weighed the causes of that occasional mention, have suffered themselves to be greatly misled by the Rabbins.

I. The most particular account we have of the *Schools of the prophets* is in the first book of Samuel, and on this occasion: David, in his escape from the rage of Saul, fled to his protector, Samuel, who then presided over a *School of the prophets*, at Naioth in Ramah<sup>1</sup>. When this was told to Saul, he sent messengers in pursuit of him<sup>2</sup>. And, on the ill success of their errand, went afterwards himself<sup>3</sup>. But as it was the intent of the historian, in this mention of the *Schools of the Prophets*, only to acquaint us with the effect they had on Saul and his messengers, when the spirit of God came upon them, we have only a partial view of these Collegiate bodies, that is, a view of them while at

<sup>1</sup> 1 SAM. xix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 23.  
their



their DEVOTIONS only, and not at their STUDIES. For Saul and his messengers coming when the Society was *prophefying*<sup>7</sup>, or at divine worship, the spirit of God fell upon them, and they *prophefied* also. And thus the *Cbal. Par.* understands *prophefying*, as did the apostolic writers, who use the word in the same sense, of adoring God, and singing praises unto him. For we may well suppose these Societies began and ended all their daily studies with this holy exercise.

But from hence, writers of contrary parties have fallen into the same strange and absurd opinion; while they imagined that, because these *Schools* were indeed nurseries of the Prophets, that therefore they were places of instruction for I don't know what kind of ART OF PROPHECY. Spinoza borrowed this senseless fancy from the Rabbins, and hath delivered it down to his followers<sup>8</sup>; from whence they conclude that PROPHECY was amongst the mechanic arts of the Hebrews. But an inquirer of either common sense or common honesty would have seen it was a College for the study of the Jewish Law only; and, as such, naturally and properly, a seminary of *Prophets*. For those who were most knowing as well as zealous in the Law, were surely the most fit to convey GOD's commands to his People.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 20.

<sup>8</sup> The author of the *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* says — "They [the Pagans] learnt the art [divination] in schools, or under discipline, as the Jews did *prophefying* in the *Schools and Colleges of the Prophets* [For which *Wheatly's Schools of the Prophets* is quoted] where the learned Dodwell says, the candidates for prophecy were taught the rules of divination practised by the Pagans, who were skilled therein, and in possession of the art long before them." P. 28.

This

This account of the nature of the *Schools of the prophets* helps to shew us how it became a proverb in Israel, IS SAUL ALSO AMONGST THE PROPHETS?<sup>a</sup> which, I apprehend, has been commonly mistaken. The proverb was used to express a thing unlooked for and unlikely. But surely the *spirit of God* falling occasionally on their supreme Magistrate, at a time when it was so plentifully bestowed on private men, could be no such unexpected matter to the people; who knew too, that even Idolaters and Gentiles had partaken of it, while concerned in matters which related to their Oeconomy. But more than this, They could not be ignorant that the *spirit of God* had usually made its abode with Saul; as appears from the following words of the sacred historian, *But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him*<sup>b</sup>. From all this I conclude that the people's surprise, which occasioned this proverb, was not because they heard the *spirit of God* had fallen upon him; but for a very different reason, which I shall now endeavour to explain.

SAUL, with many great qualities, both of a public man and a private, and in no respect an unable Chief, was yet so poorly prejudiced in favour of the human Policies of the neighbouring Nations, as to become impiously cold and neg-

<sup>a</sup> 1 SAM. xix. 24.

<sup>b</sup> 1 SAM. xvi. 14. — Dr. Mead, in his *Medica Sacra*, cap. iii. p. 25, observes that *what is said of the spirit of the Lord is not to be understood literally*. He did not reflect that the Vicegerent of the Theocracy is here spoken of. Otherwise surely, he could not but acknowledge that if there was any such thing as the SPIRIT OF THE LORD existing in that administration, it must needs reside in the supreme Magistrate.



ligent in the support and advancement of the *LAW OF GOD*; tho' raised to regal power from a low and obscure condition, for this very purpose. He was, in a word, a mere Politician, without the least zeal or love for the divine Constitution of his Country. This was his great, and no wonder it should prove, his unpardonable crime. For his folly had reduced things to that extremity, that either He must fall, or the Law. Now, this pagan turn of mind was no secret to the People. When, therefore, they were told that he had sent frequent messengers to the supreme School of the prophets, where zeal for the Law was so eminently professed; and had afterwards gone himself thither, and entered with divine raptures and extasy, into their devotions; they received this extraordinary news with all the wonder and amazement it deserved. And, in the height of their surprise, they cried out, *Is Saul also amongst the prophets?* i. e. Is Saul, who, throughout his whole reign, hath so much slighted and contemned the Law, and would conduct all his actions by the mere rules of human Policy, is he, at length become studious of and zealous for the *Law of God*? And the *miracle*, of such a change in a Politician, brought it into a proverb before the mistake was found out.

This matter will receive farther light from what we are told, in the same story, concerning DAVID. A man of so opposite a character, with regard to his sentiments of the Law, that it appears to have been for this difference only that he was decreed by GOD to succeed the other, in his kingdom. Now David, the story tells us, sojourned for some time in this School. — *So David fled and escaped, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that*  
Saul

*Saul had done to him, and HE AND SAMUEL WENT AND DWELT IN NAIOTH<sup>c</sup>. And here it was, as we may reasonably conclude, that he so greatly cultivated and improved his natural disposition of love and zeal for the Law, as to merit that most glorious of all titles, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART; for, till now, his way of life had been very distant from accomplishments of this nature; his childhood and youth were spent in the country; and his early manhood in camps and courts<sup>d</sup>. But it is of importance to the cause of truth*

<sup>c</sup> 1 SAM. xvi. 18.

<sup>d</sup> There is a difficulty in the history of *David*, in which SPIROZA much exults, as it supports him in his impious undertaking on Sacred Scripture. It is this, In the xvth chap. of the first book of Samuel, we find David sent for to Court, to sooth Saul's melancholy with his harp. On his arrival, he gave so much satisfaction, that the distempered Monarch sent to his father to desire he might *stand before him*, ver. 22. that is, remain in his service. David hath leave; and becomes Saul's *Armour-bearer*, [ver. 21.] Yet in the very next chapter, viz. the xviith (which relates an incursion of the Philistines, and the defiance of Goliath) when David goes to Saul for leave to accept the challenge, neither the king, nor the captain of his host know any thing of their champion or of his lineage. This is the difficulty, and a great one it is. But it would soon become none, in the usual way Critics have of removing difficulties, which is by supposing, that whatever occasions them, is an *interpolation*; and some blind manuscript is always at hand to support the blinder Criticism. But had more time been employed in the study of the *nature of Scripture History*, and somewhat less in *collations* of manuscripts, those would have found a nearer way to the wood, who now, cannot see wood for trees. In a word, the true solution seems to be this: David's adventure with Goliath was prior in time to his solacing Saul with his music. Which latter story is given by way of anticipation in chap. xvi. but very properly and naturally. For there, the historian having related at large, how God had rejected Saul, and anointed David, goes on, as it was a matter of highest moment in a RELIGIOUS HISTORY, to inform us of the effects both of one and the other; though we are not to suppose



truth to know, that this CHARACTER was not given him for his PRIVATE morals, but his PUBLIC; his zeal

pose them, the instantaneous effects. The effect of Saul's rejection was, he tells us, the departure of GOD's spirit from him, and his being troubled with an evil spirit, [ver. 14.] this leads him, naturally, to speak of the effect of David's election, namely, his being endowed with many divine graces; for Saul's malady was only to be alleviated by David's skill on the harp. When the historian had, in this very judicious manner, anticipated the story, he returns from the 14th to the 23d verse of the xvth chap. to the order of time, in the beginning of the xviii chapter. So that the true chronology of this part of David's life stands thus: He is anointed by Samuel,—he carries provisions to his brethren, incamped against the Philistines, in the valley of Elah,—he fights and overcomes Goliath,—is received into the king's court,—contracts a friendship with Jonathan,—incurs Saul's jealousy,—retires home to his father,—is, after some time, sent for back to court, to soothe Saul's melancholy with his harp—proves successful, and is made his armour-bearer,—and, again, excites Saul's jealousy, who endeavours to smite him with his javelin. This whole history is to be found between the first verse of the 16th, and the tenth of the xviii chapter. Within this, is the anticipation above-mentioned, beginning at the fourteenth verse of the xvth chapter, and ending at the twenty-third verse. Which anticipated history, in order of time, comes in between the 9th and 10th ver. of the xviii chapter, where, indeed, the breach is apparent. For in the 9th verse it is said, *And Saul eyed David from that day forward.* He had just begun, as the text tells us, to entertain a jealousy of David from the women's saying in their songs, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.* "—*From that day forward Saul eyed David,*" i. e. watched over his conduct. Yet, in the very next verse, it says, *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul—And David played with his hand—And Saul cast the javelin.* This could never be on the morrow of that day on which he first began to entertain a jealousy; for the text says, *from that day forward* he began to watch over his conduct, to find whether his jealousy was well grounded. Here then is the breach, between which, in order of time, comes in the relation of the evil spirit's falling upon Saul; his sending for David from his father's house, &c. For when Saul began first, on account of the songs of the women, to grow jealous of David, and to watch his behaviour, David, uneasy in his situation,

zeal for the advancement of the glory of the THEOCRACY. This is seen from the first mention of him

tion, asked leave to retire: which we may suppose was easily granted. He is sent for again to court: Saul again grows jealous: but the cause, we are now told, was different: *And Saul was afraid of David, BECAUSE the Lord was WITH HIM, and was DEPARTED FROM SAUL*, ver. 12. This plainly shews, that the departing of God's spirit from Saul was after the conquest of Goliath: consequently, that all between ver. 14 and 23 of the xvth chapter is an anticipation, and, in order of time, comes in between ver. 9 and 10 of the xviii chapter, where there is a great breach discoverable by the disjointed parts of distant time. Thus the main difficulty is master'd. But there is another near as stubborn, which this solution likewise removes. When David is recommended by the courtiers for the cure of Saul's disorder, he is represented as a *mighty valiant man; a man of war and prudent in matters, and that the Lord was with him*, chap. xvi. 18. i. e. a soldier well versed in affairs, and successful in his undertakings. Accordingly he is sent for; and preferred to a place which required valour, strength, and experience; he is made Saul's *armour-bearer*. Yet when afterwards, according to the common chronology, he comes to fight Goliath, he proves a raw unexperienced stripling, unused to arms, and unable to bear them; and, as such, despised by the Giant. I will not mispend the reader's time, in reckoning up the strange and forced senses the critics have put upon these two passages, to make them consistent; but only observe, that this reformation of the chronology, renders all clear and easy. David had vanquished the Philistine; was become a favourite of the people; and, on that account, the object of Saul's jealousy; to avoid the ill effects of which, he prudently retired. During this recess, Saul was seized with his disorder. His servants supposed it might be alleviated by music; Saul consents to the remedy, and orders an artist to be sought for. They were acquainted with David's skill on the harp, and likewise with Saul's indisposition towards him. It was a delicate point, which required address; and therefore they recommend him in this artful manner, — *The son of Jesse is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person*: — That is, "as you must have one constantly in attendance, both at court, and in your military expeditions, to be always at hand on occasion, the son of Jesse will become both stations well: he will strengthen your camp, and adorn your court; for he is a tried soldier, and of a graceful

him under this appellation, by Samuel, who tells Saul—*But now thy kingdom shall not continue.*—

The

graceful presence. You have nothing to fear from his ambition, for you saw with what prudence he went into voluntary banishment, when his popularity had incurred your displeasure.”—Accordingly Saul is prevailed on : David is sent for, and succeeds with his music. This dissipates all former umbrage ; and, as one that was to be ever in attendance, he is made his *armour-bearer*. This sunshine continued, till David’s great successes again awakened Saul’s jealousy ; and then the lifted javelin was, as usual, to strike off all court-payments. Thus we see how these difficulties are cleared up, and what light is thrown upon the whole history by the supposition of an anticipation in the latter part of the xvth chapter, an anticipation the most natural, proper, and necessary for the purpose of the historian. The only reason I can conceive of its lying so long unobserved is, that, in the xviiith chap. ver. 15. it is said, *But David went, and returned from Saul, to feed his father’s sheep at Beth-lehem*. Now this being when the Israelites were incamped in Elah against the Philistines, and after the relation of his going to court to sooth Saul’s troubled spirit with his music, seems to fix the date of his standing before Saul in quality of musician, in the order of time in which it is related. But the words, *David went and returned from Saul*, seem not to be rightly understood ; they do not mean, David left Saul’s Court where he had resided, but that he left Saul’s Camp to which he had been summoned. The case was this : A sudden invasion of the Philistines had penetrated to Shochoh, *which belonged to Judah*. Now on such occasions, there always went out a general summons for all able to bear arms, to meet at an appointed rendezvous ; where a choice being made of those most fit for service, the rest were sent back again to their several homes. To such a rendezvous, all the tribes at this time assembled. Amongst the men of Beth-lehem, came Jesse and his eight sons ; the three eldest were enrolled into the troops, and the rest sent home again. But of these, David is only particularly named ; as the history related particularly to him. *Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons : and the man went amongst men for an old man in the days of Saul. And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle.—And David was the youngest, and the three eldest followed Saul. But David went, and returned from Saul, to feed his father’s sheep at Beth-lehem*, i. e. he was dismissed by the captains of the host, as too young for service.

*The Lord hath sought him* A MAN AFTER HIS OWN HEART, and *the Lord hath commanded him to be Captain over his People*<sup>c</sup>. And again, God himself says, *I have chosen Jerusalem that my name might be there, and have chosen DAVID to be over my people Israel*<sup>d</sup>. Here David's vicegerency, we see, is represented to be as necessary to the support of the Œconomy, as God's peculiar residence in Jerusalem. Conformably to these ideas it was, that Hosea, prophesying of the restoration of the Jews, makes the God of Israel and his Vicegerent inseparable parts of the Œconomy. — *Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their GOD and DAVID their KING*<sup>e</sup>, i. e. they shall have

service. And in these sentiments, we find, they continued, when he returned with a message from his father to the camp. — I have only to add, that this way of anticipation is very frequent with this sacred historian. — In the xviiiith chap. ver. 11. it is said, *And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it: and David avoided out of his presence TWICE*. But one of these times relates to a second casting of the javelin a considerable time after the first, here spoken of, which is recorded in chap. xix. 10. So again the historian telling us in the xth chapter, how Saul, when he was first anointed by Samuel, prophesied amongst the Prophets, says, *And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw, that behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? — Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?* ver. 11, 12. But it is evident, that the original of the proverb, was his second prophesying amongst the prophets at *Naioth*, recorded chap. xix. both for the reasons given above, and for these: 1. Saul was not at this time known to the people, and 2. The original of the proverb is said to arise from this second prophesying, ver. 24. Therefore the account of the proverb in the tenth chapter is given by way of anticipation.

<sup>c</sup> 1 SAM. xiii. 14.<sup>d</sup> 2 CHRON. vi. 6.<sup>e</sup> HOS. iii. 5.  
the



the same zeal for the dispensation which king David had; and on account of which they shall honour his memory. Now if we would but seek for the reason of this pre-eminence, in David's *public*, not in his *private* character, we should see it afforded no occasion of scandal<sup>e</sup>. His zeal for the Law was constantly the same; as is manifest by this distinguishing circumstance, that he never fell into Idolatry. But the phrase itself of *a man after God's own heart*, is best explained in the case of Samuel. ELI the prophet was rejected, and SAMUEL put in his place just in the same manner that DAVID superseded SAUL. On this occasion, when God's purpose was denounced to Eli, we find it expressed in the same manner, *And I will raise me up a faithful priest, THAT SHALL DO ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH IS IN MINE HEART*<sup>f</sup>. What was then *in God's heart*? (to speak in the language of humanity) the context tells us, *The establishment of his Dispensation*. Thus, we see, *the man after God's own heart*, is the man who seconds God's views in the support of the Theocracy. No other virtue was here in question. Tho' in an indefinite way

<sup>e</sup> A malignant and very dull buffoon, who appears to have had little idea of this matter, and less inclination to be better instructed, lately published a large and virulent invective against the personal character of DAVID; his pretended provocation was as extraordinary; it was a pulpet parallel; of which he ironically complains, as injurious to a modern character of great name, who is complimented with a likeness to the King of Israel. He was answered as he deserved. — But, if Divines think they can manage infidel cavils by the aid of fums and systems, instead of studying to acquaint themselves with the nature and genius of the Jewish dispensation, as it lies in the Bible, unbelievers will have little to apprehend, how bad soever be the cause which a low vanity has put them upon supporting.

<sup>f</sup> 1 SAM. ii. 35.

of speaking, where the subject is only the general relation of man to God, no one can, indeed, be called a *man after God's own heart*, but he who uses his best endeavours to imitate God's purity as far as miserable humanity will allow, in the uniform practice of every virtue.

By this time, therefore, I presume the serious Reader will be disposed to take for just what it is worth, that refined observation of the noble author of the *Characteristics*, where he says, "It is not possible, by the *musé's art* to make that royal Hero appear amiable in human eyes, who found such favour in the eye of Heaven. Such are mere human hearts, that they can hardly find the least sympathy with that ONLY ONE which had the character of being after the pattern of the Almighty." — His lordship seems willing to make any thing *the test of truth*, but that only which has a claim to it, RIGHT REASON. Sometime this *test* is RIDICULE; here, it is the ART OF POETRY — *it is not possible* (says he) *for the musé's art to make that royal Hero appear amiable in human eyes*. Therefore, because DAVID was not a character to be managed by the Poet, for the Hero of a fiction, he was not a fit instrument in the hands of God, to support a Theocracy: and having nothing amiable in the eyes of our noble Critic, there could be nothing in him to make him acceptable to his Maker. But when classical criticism goes beyond its bounds, it is liable to be bewildered: as here, The noble Author assures us that David was the only man *characterised*, to be AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART, whereas we see the very same character is

given of Samuel; and both honoured with this glorious appellation for the same reason.

II. As for the GREAT SANHEDRIM, it seems to have been established after the failure of Prophecy. And concerning the members of this body, the Rabbins tell us, there was a tradition, that they were bound to be skilled in all sciences<sup>b</sup>. So far is certain, that they extended their jurisdiction to the judging of doctrines and opinions as appears by their deputation to JESUS, to know by what authority he did his great works. And as the address of our blessed Saviour on this occasion deserves well to be illustrated, I shall set down the occurrence as it is recorded by St. Matthew:—"When he was  
" come into the temple, the chief priests and the  
" elders of the people came unto him as he was  
" teaching, and said, By what authority dost thou  
" these things? And who gave thee this autho-  
" rity? And JESUS answered and said unto them,  
" I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell  
" me, I in like wise will tell you by what autho-  
" rity I do these things. The baptism of *John*,  
" whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And  
" they reasoned with themselves saying, If we shall  
" say from heaven, he will say unto us, Why did  
" ye not then believe him? But if we shall say of  
" men, we fear the people, for all hold *John* as a  
" prophet. And they answered JESUS and said,  
" We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Nei-  
" ther tell I you by what authority I do these  
" things<sup>c</sup>." We are not to suppose this to be a captious evasion of a question made by those whose authority he did not acknowledge. On the

<sup>b</sup> See Smith's *Select Discourses*, p. 258.  
ver. 23, & seq.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xxi.

contrary, it was a direct reply to an acknowledged jurisdiction (as JESUS was obedient to all the institutions of his country) convincing them that the question needed not, even on the principles of that jurisdiction, any precise answer. They sent to him to know the authority on which he acted. He asks them whether they had yet determined of John's: they say, they had not. Then replies JESUS, "I need not tell you my authority; since the Sanhedrim's not having yet determined of John's, shews such a determination unnecessary; or at least, since (both by John's account and mine) he is represented as the fore-runner of my mission, it is fit to begin with his pretensions first." The address and reasoning of this reply are truly divine.

The foregoing observations concerning this method of divine wisdom, in the establishment of the Jewish Theocracy, will be much supported, if we contrast it with that which Providence was pleased to take in the propagation of Christianity.

The blessed JESUS came down to teach mankind a spiritual Religion, the object of each individual as such; and offered to their acceptance on the sole force of its own evidence. The Propagators of this religion had no need to be endowed with worldly authority or learning; for here was no Body of men to be conducted; nor no civil Policy or government to be erected or administered. Had JESUS, on the contrary, made choice of the Great and Learned for this employment, they had discredited their own success. It might have been then objected, that the Gospel had made its way by the aid of human power or sophistry. To preserve,



preserve, therefore, the splendour of its evidence unsullied, the meanest and most illiterate of a barbarous people were made choice of for the instruments of God's last great Revelation to mankind: armed with no other power but of Miracles, and that only for the credence of their mission; and with no other wisdom but of Truth, and that only to be proposed freely to the understandings of Particulars. St. Paul, who had fathomed the mysterious depths of divine wisdom under each Œconomy, was so penetrated with the view of this last Dispensation, that he breaks out into this rapturous and triumphant exclamation, *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world*<sup>k</sup>?

But further, Divine wisdom so wonderfully contrived, that the inability and ignorance of the Propagators of Christianity were as useful to the advancement of this Religion, as the authority and wisdom of the Leader of the Jews were for the establishment of theirs.

I shall only give one instance out of many which will occur to an attentive reader of the Evangelic history.

When JESUS had chosen these mean and weak instruments of his power, he suffered them to continue in their national prejudices concerning his Character; the nature of his kingdom; and the extent of his jurisdiction; as the sole human means of keeping them attached to his service, not only during the course of their attendance on his ministry,

<sup>k</sup> 1 COR. i. 20.

but for some time after his resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; that Power which was to *lead them into all truth*; but by just and equal steps. Let us see the use of this, in the following circumstance: From the order of the whole of God's Dispensation to mankind, as laid down in Scripture, we learn, that the offer of the Gospel was to be first fairly made to the Jews; and then afterwards to the Gentiles. Now when, soon after the ascension of our Lord, the Church was forced, by the persecution of the Synagogue, to leave Judea, and to disperse itself through all the regions round about; had the Apostles, on this dispersion, been fully instructed in the design of God to call the Gentiles into his church, resentment for their ill usage within Judea, and the small prospect of better success amongst those who were without, which they of Jerusalem had prejudiced against the Gospel, would naturally have disposed them to turn immediately to the Gentiles. By which means God's purpose, without a supernatural force upon their minds, had been defeated; as so great a part of the Jews would not have had the Gospel *first preached unto them*. But now, pushed on by this commodious prejudice, that the benefits belonged properly to the race of Abraham, they directly addressed themselves to their brethren of the *dispersion*: where meeting with the same ill success, their sense of the desperate condition of the house of Israel would now begin to abate that prejudice in their favour. And then came the time to enlighten them in this matter, without putting too great a force upon their minds; which is not God's way of acting with free agents. Accordingly, his purpose of calling the Gentiles into the Church was now clearly revealed to PETER at Joppa; and a proper subject, wherewith to begin this great work, was ready provided for him,

But



But though ignorance in the Propagator of a divine truth amongst particulars, may serve to these important ends, yet to shew still plainer how pernicious this inability would be wherever a Society is concerned, as in the establishment of the Jewish Religion, I shall produce an occasional example even in the Christian,

For when now so great numbers of the Gentiles were converted to CHRIST, that it became necessary to form them into a Church: that is, a religious Society; which of course hath its Policy as well as the Civil; so hurtful was ignorance in its governing members, that divers of them, though graced with many gifts of the holy Spirit, caused such disorders in their assemblies as required all the abilities of the LEARNED APOSTLE to reform and regulate. And then it was, and for this purpose, that PAUL, the proper Apostle of the Gentiles<sup>1</sup>, was, in an extraordinary manner, called in, to conduct, by his learning and abilities, and with the assistance of his companion LUKE, a learned man also, this part of God's purpose to its completion. The rest were properly Apostles of the Jews; which people having a religious Society already formed, the converts from thence had a kind of rule to go by, which served them for their present occasions; and therefore these needed no great talents of parts or learning; nor had they any. But a new Society was to be formed amongst the Gentile converts; and this required an able conductor; and such an one they had in Paul. But will any one say that his learning afforded an objection against the divinity of his mission? We con-

<sup>1</sup> *The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter. GAL. ii. 7.*

clude therefore, that none can arise from the abilities, natural and acquired, of the great Jewish Lawgiver. The point to be proved.

II. We come now to the second part of the Proposition, *That the Laws instituted in compliance to the People's prejudices, and in opposition to Egyptian superstitions, are no reasonable objection to the divinity of the Jewish Religion.* That most of these Laws were given in *opposition* to Egyptian superstitions, believers seem not unwilling to allow; as apprehending no consequence from such a concession that will give them trouble. The thing which startles them is the supposition that some of these Laws were given in *compliance* to the Jewish prejudices; because infidels have enforced this circumstance to the discredit of Moses's pretensions. To satisfy believers therefore, I shall shew, "that the Laws in *compliance* were a consequence of the Laws in *opposition*." And, to reconcile them to both sorts, I shall attempt to prove, from the double consideration of their NECESSITY and FITNESS, that the institution of such Laws is no reasonable objection to the divinity of their original.

I. If God did indeed interfere in the concerns of this People, it will, I suppose, be easily granted, that his purpose was to separate them from the contagion of that universal idolatry, which had now overspread the whole earth; and to which, especially to the EGYPTIAN, they were most inveterately prone.

There were two ways, in the hand of God, for effecting this separation: either to overrule the Will; and this required only the exercise of his power:



power : or, by leaving the Will at liberty, to counterwork the passions; and this required the exercise of his WISDOM.

Now, as all the declared purposes of this separation shew, that God acted with the Israelities as MORAL AGENTS, we must needs conclude, notwithstanding the peculiar favour by which they were elected, and the extraordinary providence by which they were conducted, that yet, amidst all this display and blaze of almighty Power, the WILL ever remained free and uncontrolled. This not only appears from the nature of the thing, but from the whole history of their reduction out of Egypt. To give only one instance: Moses tells us, that God led the Israelites into the land of Canaan, not by the direct way of the Philistines, lest the sight of danger, in an expedition against a strong and warlike People, should make them chuse to return to Egypt, and seek for refuge in their slavery: But he led them about, by the way of the Wilderness, to inure them by degrees to fatigue and hardships; the best foundation of military prowess<sup>m</sup>. And when God, to punish them for their cowardice, on the report of the faithless explorers of the land, had decreed that that generation should be worn away in the Wilderness<sup>n</sup>, the wise policy of this sentence was as conspicuous as the justice of it.

If then the Wills of this people were to be left free, and their minds influenced only by working on their passions, it is evident, that God, when he became their Lawgiver, would act by the same policy in use amongst human Lawgivers for restraining the vicious inclinations of the People.

<sup>m</sup> EXOD. xiii. 17.

<sup>n</sup> NUMB. xiii. and xiv.

The same, I say, in kind, though differing infinitely in degree. For all People, whether conducted on divine or human measures, having the same nature, the same liberty of Will, and the same terrestrial situation, must needs require the same mode of guidance. And, in fact, we find the Jewish to be indeed constituted like other Civil governments, with regard to the integral parts of a Political society.

According to all human conception therefore, we see no way left to keep such a People, thus separated, free from the contagion of idolatry, but,

First, by severe penal Laws against idolaters,

And, Secondly, by framing a multifarious Ritual, whose whole direction, looking contrary to the forbidden superstitions, would, by degrees, wear out the present fondness for them; and at length bring on an habitual aversion to them. This is the way of wise Lawgivers; who, in order to keep the Will from revolting, forbear to do every thing by direct force and fear of punishment; but employ, where they can, the gentler methods of restraint.

Thirdly, but as even in the practice of this gentler method, when the passions and prejudices run high, a direct and professed opposition will be apt to irritate and inflame them; therefore it will be further necessary, in order to break and elude their violence, to turn mens fondness for the forbidden practice into a harmless channel; and by indulging them in those customs, which they could not well abuse to superstition, enable the more  
severe

severe and opposite institutions to perform their work. Such, for instance, might be the *lighting up of lamps* in religious Worship: which practice Clemens Alexandrinus assures us came first from the Egyptians<sup>o</sup>: nor would Witius himself venture to deny it<sup>p</sup>. But, for the same reason, we conclude that the *brazen serpent* was no imitation of an Egyptian practice, as Sir. J. Marsham would persuade us; because we see how easily it might, and did suffer abuse. Which conclusion, not only our principle leads us to make, but matter of fact enables us to prove<sup>q</sup>.

Such a conduct therefore as this, where the Will is left free, appears to be NECESSARY.

II. Let us see next whether it were FIT, that is, Whether it agreed with the wisdom, dignity, and purity of God.

I. His wisdom indeed is the Attribute peculiarly manifested in this method of government; and certainly, with as great lustre as we should have seen his POWER, had it been his good pleasure to have over-ruled the Will. To give an instance only in one particular, most liable to the ridicule of unbelievers; I mean, in that part of the Jewish Institute which concerns *clean* and *unclean* meats; and descends to so low and minute a detail, that men, ignorant of the nature and end of this re-

<sup>o</sup> Αἰγυπτίους τὰς λαμπάς καὶ τὸν ὄφιν κατεσκεύασαν. Strom. l. i. p. 306.

<sup>p</sup> Earum [ lucernarum ] prima ad religionem accensio, utrum Hebræis debeatur, an Ægyptiis, haud facile dixero. Ægypt. p. 190.

<sup>q</sup> See above.



gulation, have, on its apparent *unsfitness* to engage the concern of God, concluded against the divine original of the Law. But would they reflect, that the purpose of separating one People from the contagion of universal idolatry, and this, in order to facilitate a still greater good, was a design not unworthy the Governor of the Universe, they would see this part of the Jewish Institution in a different light: They would see the brightest marks of divine wisdom in an injunction which took away the very grounds of all commerce with foreign Nations. For those who can neither eat nor drink together, are never likely to become intimate. This will open to us the admirable method of divine Providence in PETER's *vision*. The time was now come that the Apostle should be instructed in God's purpose of calling the Gentiles into the Church: At the hour of repast, therefore, he had a scenical representation of all kind of meats, *clean* and *unclean*; of which he was bid to take and eat indifferently and without distinction<sup>r</sup>. The primary design of this vision, as appears by the context, was to inform him that the *partition-wall* was now broken down, and that the Gentiles were to be received into the church of CHRIST. But besides its figurative meaning, it had a literal; and signified, that the distinction of MEATS, as well as of MEN, was now to be abolished. And how necessary such an information was, when he was about to go upon his mission to the Gentiles, and was to conciliate their benevolence and goodwill, I have observed above. But altho' this was the principal cause of the distinction of meats into clean and unclean, yet another was certainly for the preservation of health. This institution was

<sup>r</sup> ACTS x. 10, & seq.



of necessity to be observed in the first case, to secure the great object of a *separation*: and in the second case, (which is no trivial mark of the wisdom of the Institutor) it might be safely and commodiously observed by a People thus *separated*, who were consequently to be for ever confined within the limits of one country. And here the absurdity of this part of Mahometanism evidently betrays itself. Mahomet would needs imitate the Law of Moses, as in other things, so in this, *the distinction of meats, clean and unclean*; without considering that in a Religion formed for conquest, whose followers were to inhabit Regions of the most different and contrary qualities, the food which in one climate was hurtful or nutritive, in another changed its properties to their contraries. But to shew still more clearly the difference between Institutions formed at hazard, and those by divine appointment, we may observe, that when Judaism arrived at its completion in Christianity, the followers of which were the inhabitants of all Climes, the distinction between meats clean and unclean was abolished; which, at the same time, serving other great ends explained above, shew the Dispensation, (in the course of which these several changes of the Oeconomy took place) to be really Divine.

2. As to the DIGNITY and Majesty of God, that, surely, does not suffer, in his not interfering with his power, to force the Will, but permitting it to be drawn and inclined by those *cords of a man*, his natural motives. The dignity of any Being consists in observing a conformity between his actions, and his quality, or station. Now it pleased the God of heaven to take upon himself the office of supreme Magistrate of the Jewish Republic. But it  
is

is (as we have shewn) the part of a wise Magistrate to restrain a People, devoted to any particular superstition, by a Ritual directly *opposite* in the general to that superstition; and yet *similar* in such particular practices as could not be abused or perverted: because compliance with the popular prejudices in things indifferent, naturally eludes the force of their propensity to things evil. In this wise Policy therefore, the dignity of the God of heaven was not impaired.

3. Nor is his PURITY any more affected by this supposed conduct. The Rites, in question, are owned to be, in themselves, indifferent: and good or evil only as they are directed to a true or false object.

If it be said "that their carnal nature, or wearisome multiplicity, or scrupulous observance, render them unworthy of the purity and spiritual nature of God:" To Believers, I reply, that this objection holds equally against these Rites in whatever view they themselves are wont to regard them:—To Unbelievers; that they forget, or do not understand God's primary end, in the institution of the Jewish Ritual; which was, to preserve the people from the contagion of these idolatrous practices with which they were surrounded. But nothing could be so effectual to this purpose, as such a Ritual. And since the continual proneness of that People to idolatry hath been shewn to arise from the inveterate prejudice of *intercommunity of worship*, nothing could be so effectual as the extreme minuteness of their Ritual.

If it be said, "that the former abuse of these *indulged Rites*, to an abominable superstition had



made them unfit to be employed in the service of the God of purity:" I reply, that there is nothing in the nature of things, to make them *unfit*. That a material substance, materially soiled, stained and infected, is unfit to approach and be joined to one of great cleanness and purity, is not to be denied. But let us not mistake words for things; and draw a metaphysical conclusion from a metaphorical expression. The soil and stain, in the case before us, is altogether figurative, that is, unreal. And in truth, the very objection is taken from the command of this very Law, to abstain from things polluted by idolatry: But we now understand, that the reason of its so severely forbidding the use of some things that had been abused to superstition, was the very same with its indulging the use of others which had been equally abused; namely, to compass, by the best, though different yet concurring means, that one great end, *the EXTIRPATION OF IDOLATRY*. Notwithstanding this, the Law concerning things polluted, like many other of the Jewish observances, hath occasionally been adopted by different Sects in the Christian church. Thus our PURITANS, who seem to have had their name from the subject in debate, quarrelled with the established use of the cross in baptism, the surplice, and the posture of communicating, because they had been abused to the support of popish superstition\*. I chuse this instance, that the Men whom I am arguing against, may see the issue of their objection; and that They, from whom

\* There were no sort of men more averse to the system here defended of Jewish customs borrowed from Egypt, than those Puritans. Yet when they could serve a turn by adopting it, they made no scruple of so doing. Thus, in order to disgrace the surplice, they venture to say, in the *Declaration of the Ministers of London*, published 1566. That *the surplice, or albise linen garment, came from the EGYPTIANS into the Jewish church*.

the instance is taken, may be shewn the unreasonableness of their separation; as far at least as it was occasioned on account of ceremonies.

If, lastly, it be said, “ that these Rites, which once had been, might be again, abused to superstition; and were therefore *unfit* to be employed in this new service;” I reply, that this is a mistake. For 1. We go on the supposition, that the Jews were indulged in no practices capable of being so abused. 2. That tho’ they might in themselves be subject to abuse, yet they carried their corrective with them; which was, first, their being intermixed with a vast number of other Rites directly opposite to all idolatrous practice; and secondly, their making part of a burdensome multifarious Worship, which would keep the people so constantly employed, as to afford them neither time nor occasion, from the cause in question, of falling into foreign idolatries.

But how can I hope to be heard in defence of this conduct of the God of Israel, when even the believing part of those whom I oppose, seem to pay so little attention to the reasoning of Jesus himself; who has admirably illustrated and vindicated the wisdom of this conduct, in the familiar parable of *new cloth in old garments*, and *new wine in old bottles*<sup>1</sup>: which, though given in answer to a particular question, was intended to instruct us in this general truth, That it is the way

<sup>1</sup> *And he spake also a parable unto them, No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. LUKE v. 36.*



of God to accommodate his Institutions to the state, the condition, and contracted habits, of his creatures.

But as this notion hath been condemned *ex cathedra*<sup>a</sup>; and the *Aegyptiaca* of HERMAN WITSIUS recommended to the clergy, as a *distinct and solid confutation* of *Spencer's book, de legibus Hebræorum ritualibus*, I shall examine what that learned Foreigner hath to say against it. All Witfius's reasoning on this point is to be found in the fourteenth chapter of his third book; which I shall endeavour to pick out, and set in the fairest light.

1. His first argument is, "that it is a dishonouring of God, who has the hearts of men in his power, and can turn them as he pleases, to conceive of him as standing in need of the tricks of crafty Politicians; not but, he confesses, that God deals with men as reasonable creatures, and attains his end by fit and adequate means; and, in the choice of these means, manifests a wisdom perfectly admirable." Yet, for all this, he says, "we cannot, without the highest contumely, presume to compare the sacred Policy of Heaven with the arts and shifts of the beggarly politics of this world<sup>x</sup>."

—All

<sup>a</sup> *Waterland's charge to the clergy of Middlesex.*

<sup>x</sup> Verum enimvero quantâcunque hæc civilis prudentiæ speciem habeant, præter Dei verbum cuncta dicuntur, & humani commenta sunt ingenii, divini nominis majestate haud satis digna. Nimirum cauti catique in seculo mortales Deum ex sua metiuntur indole: arcanasque imperandi artes, & vasafrumenta politicorum, quæ vix terra probet, cælo locant. Quasi vero in populo sibi formando firmandoque iis astutiarum ambagibus indigeat is, qui, mortalium corda in manu sua habens, ea, quorum vult, flectit. Non nego equidem Deum cum ho-

—All I find here is only misrepresentation. Spencer never compared the wisdom of God, in the institution of the Jewish republic, to the *tricks* and *shifts* of politicians; but to their *legitimate arts* of Government, conducted on the rules of strict morality. And if, as this writer owns, God *dealt with the Israelites as reasonable creatures, and attained his end by fit and adequate means*, he must needs use a wisdom the same in kind, though vastly different in degree, with what we call human policy. But indeed, he seems reconciled to the thing: it is the name only which he dislikes. If his followers say otherwise, I desire they would explain, in some intelligible manner, their idea of that *wisdom*, in God's civil government of a people, which is not founded in the exercise of almighty power, and is yet different in kind from what we call, Policy.

2. His second argument is, "That, as God erected a new Republic, it was his will that it should *appear* new to the Israelites. Its structure was not to be patched up out of the rubbish of the Canaanitish or Egyptian Rites, but was formed according to the model brought down from heaven, and shewn to Moses in the mount. Nor was it left to the people to do the least thing in religious matters, on their own head. All was determinately ordered, even to the most minute circumstance; which was so bound upon them, that they could not do, or omit, any the least thing contrary to the Law, without becoming liable to immediate punish-

minibus, uti cum creatoris rationalibus, agentem, media adhibere iis persuadendis idonea, inque eorum mediorum delectu sapientiam ostendere prorsus admirabilem. Attamen Dei sanctissima ista sapientia cum politicorum artibus ac vafritie comparari sine insigni illius contumelia non potest. p. 282.

ment.



ment<sup>r</sup>.”—If, by this NEWNESS of the Jewish Republic, be meant, that it was different in many fundamental circumstances from all other civil policies, so as to vindicate itself to its divine Author, I not only agree with him, but, which is more than he and his recommender could do, have proved it. But this sense makes nothing to the point in question. If by NEWNESS be meant, that it had nothing in common with any of the neighbouring Institutions; To make this credible, he should have proved that God gave them new *hearts*, new *natures*, and a new *world*, along with their new *Government*. There is the same ambiguity in what he says of the *appearance* of newness to the Israelites. For it may signify either that the Institution appeared so new as to be seen to come from God; or that it appeared so new as not to resemble, in any of its parts, the Institutions of men. The first is true, but not to the purpose: the latter is to the purpose, but not true.—From the fact, of the Law’s *coming down entire from heaven*, he concludes that the genius and prejudices of the Israelites were not at all consulted: From the same fact, I conclude, that they were consulted: which of us has concluded right is left to the judgment of the public. Let me only observe, That ignorant men may compose, and have composed Laws in all things opposite to the bent and genius of a people; and

\* Uti revera novam moliebatur rempublicam, ita et novam, qualis erat, videri eam Israelitis voluit. Quippe cujus forma fuit species, non ex rituum ruderibus Canaaniticorum aut Ægyptiacorum efficta, sed cœlitus delapsa, Mose primum in sacro monstrata moente erat, ut ad illud instar cuncta in Israël componerentur. Neque permissum esse populo voluit ut in religionis negotio vel tantillum suo ageret arbitratu. Omnia determinavit ipse, ad minutissimas usque circumstantias; quibus ita eos alligavit, ut non sine præsentaneo vitæ discrimine quicquam vel omittere vel aliter agere potuerint. p. 282, 283.

they have been obeyed accordingly. But, when divine wisdom frames an Institution, we may be sure that no such solecism as that of *putting new wine into old bottles* will ever be committed.—*But the people were not consulted even in the least thing that concerned religious matters.* How is this to be reconciled with their free choice of God for their King; and with his indulgence of their impious clamours afterwards for a Vicegerent or another king? This surely *concerned religious matters*, and very capitally too, in a Policy where both the Societies were perfectly incorporated.—*But every thing was determined even to the most minute circumstances, and to be observed under the severest penalties.* What this makes for his point, I see not. But this I see, that, if indeed there were that indulgence in the Law which I contend for, these two circumstances of *minute prescription*, and *severe penalties*, must needs attend it: and for this plain reason; Men, when indulged in their prejudices, are very apt to transgress the bounds of that indulgence; it is therefore necessary that those bounds should be minutely marked out, and the transgression of them severely punished.

3. His third argument is—“That no religious Rites, formerly used by the Israelites, on their own head, were, after the giving of the law, PERMITTED, out of regard to habitude; but all things PRESCRIBED and COMMANDED: and this so precisely, that it was unlawful to deviate a finger’s breadth either to the right hand or to the left.”—This in-

\* Nec ulli in religione ritus fuerunt, ab Israëlitis olim sine numine usurpati, quibus propter assuetudinem ut in posterum quoque uterentur lege lata *permisit*: sed præscripta *jussaque* sunt omnia. Et quidem ita distincte, ut nec transverium digitum dextrorsum aut sinistrorsum declinare fas fuerit, DEUT. v. p. 283.



deed is an observation which I cannot reconcile to the learned writer's usual candour and ingenuity. He is writing against Spencer's system: and here he brings an argument against it, which he saw in Spencer's book had been brought against Grotius (who was in that system) and which Spencer answers in defence of Grotius. Therefore, as this answer will serve in defence of Spencer himself against Witsius, I shall give it at the bottom of the page<sup>a</sup>. For the rest, I apprehend all the force of this third argument to lie only in a quibble on the equivocal use of the word PERMISSION, which signifies either a *tacit connivance*, or *legal allowance*. Now Spencer used the word in this latter sense<sup>b</sup>.

But

<sup>a</sup> Testium meorum agmen claudit Grotius — Authoris verba sunt hæc: “*Sicut fines sacrificiorum diversi sunt, — ita et ritus, qui aut ab Hebræis ad alias gentes venerunt, aut, quod credibilis est, a Syris & Ægyptiis usurpati, correcti sunt ab Hebræis, & ab aliis gentibus sine ea emendatione usurpati.*” Hic in Grotium paulo animosius insurgit auctor nuperus: “*nam hoc, ait ille, cum impietate et absurditate conjunctum est.*” Quid ita? Num enim, respondet ille, Deum sanctissima sua instituta, quæ ipse prolixè sancivit, et conscribi in religiosam observationem, per inspirationem numinis sui, voluit credemus ab idolatria Syrorum & Ægyptiorum mutuo sumpsisse? Neque ea pro libitu Hebræi assumpserunt, aut assumpta emendarunt, sed omnia & singula divinitus in lege præscripta sunt, et juxta ejus normam exactissime observari debuerunt.” At opinio Grotii multo solidior est, quam ut mucrone tam obtuso confodi possit. Non enim asserit ille, vel sanus quispiam, Hebræos ritum ullum a gentibus, pro libitu suo, sumpsisse, vel sumptum pro ingenio suo correxisse. Id unum sub locutione figurata, contendit Grotius, Deum nempe ritus aliquos, usu veteri confirmatos (emendatos tamen, et ignem quasi purgatorium passos) a gentibus accepisse, et Hebræis usurpandos tradidisse; ne populus ille, rituum ethnicorum amore præceps, ad cultum et superstitionem Gentilium rueret, ni more plurimam veteri cultum præstare concederetur. *De leg. Heb. rit. vol. ii. p. 748, 749.*

<sup>b</sup> For, with regard to every thing's being exactly prescribed; from which direction it was not lawful to make the least deviation,

But *permission*, in this sense, is very consistent with *every thing's being expressly prescribed and commanded in the law*.

4. His fourth argument proceeds thus,—“ But farther, God neither *permitted*, nor *commanded*, that the Israelites should worship him after the pagan mode of worship. For it had been the same

*tion*, Spencer acknowledges this as fully as Witsius himself. “ Nihil enim cultum divinum spectans verbis obscuris aut incerti sensus a Mose traditum, nil cæco vel præcipiti zelo, nihil prurienti Judæorum ingenio, vel naturæ humanæ rerum novarum in sacris avidæ, relictum fuit. Nempe lex de minimis plerisque curavit. Ipsi arcæ annuli, &c.” *De Leg. Rit. Heb.* l. i. c. 10. sect. 5. And it is remarkable, that he employs this very circumstance, with great weight as well as ingenuity, to enforce the opposite conclusion; namely, that God admitted some rites in use amongst the Gentile nations in compliance to the people's prejudices. — Ipse ritus Mosaicus instituendi modus huic sententiæ non parum præsidii præbet. Deus enim non tantum eorum materiam, sed et locum, tempus, ipsum etiam corporis situm quandoque quo præstari debebant, aliasque minoris notæ circumstantias, accurate præscripsit. Et postquam Deus minimas quasque circumstantias rituum singulorum tradidisset, præcepto cautum est, *Deut.* iv. 2. ne quid e ceremoniis nempe vetitis iis adderetur; aut quicquam e ceremoniis nempe præceptis adimeretur. Nemo vero qui iudicio valet, opinari potest Deum horum rituum minutias accurate adeo præscripsisse, ex ullo quo ipse eorum amore vel desiderio tangebatur. A ratione multo minus abest, gentium et Hebræorum ritus haud paucos (si materiam eorum vel substantiam spectemus) proximam inter se similitudinem et affinitatem habuisse, indeque lege curatum fuisse, ne eodem modo peragerentur, sed ut circumstantiis quibusdam peculiaribus et a Deo præscriptis ab invicem discernerentur. Nam Israëlitarum ritus suos omnes e Dei præscripto peragentes, se in Jehovah [non dei aliqujus ethnici] honorem sacra sua præstare testarentur; et ratio temporum exegit, ut cultus Deo præstitus quandam ἰδιότητα retineret, nec ad ritus gentium nimis accedere, vel ab iis plusquam par erat abire videretur. Mosis ætate res in loco tam lubrico et ancipiti sitæ sunt, quod summa tantum sapientia limites eos definire nōrat, quos ultra citrave non potuit consistere Dei veri cultus. *Lib. iii. cap. 2, sect. 1.*

thing

thing to God not to be worshiped at all, as to be worshiped by Rites used in the service of Demons. And Moses teaches us that the Laws of God were very different from what Spencer imagined; as appears from DEUT. xii. 30, 31, 32. and from LEV. xviii. 2, 3, 4. Here the reason given of forbidding the vanities of Egypt, is, that Jehovah, who brought them out from amongst that people, will, from henceforth, allow no farther communication with Egypt. Small appearance of any indulgence. And hence indeed it is, that most of the ritual Laws are directly levelled against the Egyptian, Zabian, and Canaanitish superstitions, as Maimonides confesseth<sup>c</sup>.—As to what this learned man says, that we may as well not worship God at all as worship him by Rites which have been employed in Paganism, we have already overturned the foundation of that fanatical assertion. It is true, the argument labours a little in the hands of SPENCER and MAIMONIDES; while they suppose the Devil himself to be the principal Architect of pagan Superstition: for to believe that God

<sup>c</sup> Porro nec permisit, nec jussit Deus, ut eo se modo Israëlitzæ colerent, quo modo Deos suos colebant Gentiles; veritus scilicet ne per veteres istas vanitates Dæmoni cultum deferrent, si minus Deo licuisset. Nam et inanis ille metus erat: quum Deo prope modum perinde sit, si quis Dæmoni cultum deferat, siue per vanitates aliquas veteres Deo cultum deferre præsumat. Et longe aliter Deum instituisse Moses docet, DEUT. xiii. 30, 31, 32. adde LEVIT. xviii. 2, 3, 4. Audin', *Spencere*, qua ratione ab ægyptiacis vanitatibus ad suorum observantiam præceptorum Israëlitas Deus avocet? Eo id facit nomine, quod ipse Jehova et Deus ipsorum sit, qui ex Ægypto eos eripiens nihil posthac cum Ægyptiorum vanitatibus commune habere voluit. Hoc profecto non est, id quod tu dicis, allicere eos per umbratiles veterum Ægypti rituum reliquias. Atque hinc factum est ut plurima Deus legibus suis ritualibus inseruerit, Ægyptiorum, Zabiorum, Canaanæorum institutis *τὰ παραλλήλα* opposita.—Cujus rei varia a nobis exempla alibi allata sunt. p. 283, 284.

would



would employ any Rites introduced by this evil Spirit is indeed of somewhat hard digestion. But that writer, who conceives them to be the inventions of superstitious and designing men only, hath none of this difficulty to encounter. As for the observation, that *most of the ritual Laws were leveled against idolatrous superstition*, we are so far from seeing any inconsistency between this truth and that other, "that some of those *ritual Laws* did indulge the people in such habituated practices, as could not be abused to superstition," that, on the contrary, we see a necessary connexion between them. For if severe Laws were given to a people against superstitions, to which they were violently bent, it would be very proper to indulge them in some of their favourite habits, so far forth as safely they could be indulged, in order to break the violence of the rest, and to give the body of opposed Laws a fuller liberty of working their effect. And if they had Laws likewise given them in indulgence, it would be necessary to accompany such Laws with the most severe prohibitions of idolatrous practice, and of the least deviation from a tittle of the Institute. In a word, Laws in direct *opposition*, and Laws in *conformity* or compliance, had equally, as we say, the same tendency, and jointly concurred to promote the same end; namely, the preservation of the Israelites from idolatry<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> I cannot therefore agree with Mr. Whiston in the high value he sets upon a passage of Manetho—*This (says he) is a very valuable testimony of Manetho's, that the laws of Osarsisph or Moses were not in compliance with, but in opposition to, the customs of the Egyptians.* Translat. of Josephus, p. 993. However tho' this fairy treasure vanish, it is some comfort that we do not want it.

5. His fifth argument runs thus.—“Indulgence was so far from being the end of the Law, that the Ritual was given as a most heavy yoke, to subdue and conquer the ferocity of that stiffnecked people, GAL. iv. 1, 2, 3. COL. ii. 21<sup>c</sup>.”—By this one would imagine, his adversaries had contended for such a kind of indulgence as arose out of God’s fondness for a chosen People; when indeed, they suppose it to be only such an indulgence as tended the more effectually and expeditiously to subdue and conquer the ferocity of their savage tempers:

*Quos optimus  
Fallere & effugere est triumphus.*

If therefore, *that* were the END of the Law which Witſius himſelf contends for, we may be aſſured that this indulgence was one of the MEANS. But the principal and more general *means* being Laws in direct oppoſition, this juſtified the character the Apoſtle gives of the Jewish Ritual, in the two places urged againſt us.

6. His ſixth argument is,—“That the intent of the Law was to ſeparate the Iſraelites, by a partition-wall, as it were, from all other people; which, by its diverſity, might ſet them at a diſtance from idolaters, and create an averſion to idolatry<sup>f</sup>.”—As to the firſt effect of the diverſity

<sup>c</sup> Id ſibi primum in rituum juſſione propositum habuit Deus, ut laborioſis illis exercitiis *ferociam* populi indomitam, veluti *difficilimo jugo*, ſubigeret, GAL. iv. 1, 2, 3. COL. ii. 21. p. 286.

<sup>f</sup> Deinde hæc quoque Dei in rituum juſſione intentio fuit, ut eorum obſervantia, veluti *pariete intergerino*, eos à gentium communione longe ſemoveret, ERH. ii. 14, 15. — Quam autem legem

sity of the Jewish Law, the keeping the people distinct; if the learned writer would thereby insinuate (which is indeed to his point) that this distinction could be kept up only while the Jews and other nations had no similar Rites; it could never, even by the means he himself prescribes, be long kept up at all. For if the Jews were not indulged in the imitation of any pagan Rites, the Pagans might indulge themselves in the imitation of the Jewish: as indeed they are supposed to have done in the practice of CIRCUMCISION: and so this *partition-wall*, if only built of this untempered mortar of Witfius's providing, would soon tumble of itself. But the very case here given shews no necessity for ALL the laws to be in opposition, in order to secure a separation; the Jews being as effectually separated from all their neighbours when most of them used the rite of *circumcision*, as when these Jews practised it without a rival. And the reason is this, CIRCUMCISION was not given to Abraham and to his race as a mark of distinction and separation from all other people, but, what its constant use made it only fit for, a standing memorial of the covenant between GOD and Abraham. *And ye shall circumcise (says GOD) the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a TOKEN OF THE COVENANT between me and you,* GEN. xvii. 11. But though it was not given as a mark of separation, yet it effectually answered that purpose: for it preserved the memory, or was the *token*, of a covenant, which necessarily kept them separate and distinct from the rest of mankind. As to the other effect of this diversity of the Jewish Law, namely the creating an

legem præceptorum in ritibus inimicitias Apostolus vocat, hoc inter cetera innuit, fuisse eam symbolum atque instrumentum divisionis atque odii inter Israelém & gentes, p. 287, 288.

aversion



aversion to the Rites of all other nations; in this, the learned writer hath betrayed his ignorance of human nature. For we always find a more inveterate hatred and aversion, between people of differing Religions where several things are alike, than where every thing is diametrically opposite; of which a plain cause might be found in the nature of man, whose heart is so much corrupted by his passions. So that the retaining some innocent Egyptian practices, all accompanied with their provisional opposites, would naturally make the Jews more averse to Egypt, than if they had differed in every individual circumstance.

7. His last argument concludes thus,—“ The ceremonies of the Jewish Ritual were types and shadows of heavenly things: It is therefore highly improbable that God should chuse the impious and diabolic Sacra of Egypt, and the mummerly of Magic practices, for the shadows of such holy and spiritual matters.” Thus he ends, as he begun, with hard words and soft arguments. No one ever pretended to say that such kinds of practices were suffered or imitated in the Jewish Ritual. All the indulgence supposed, is of some harmless Rite or innocent Ornament, such as the *lighting up of Lamps*, or *wearing a Linnen garment*. And let me ask, whether these things, though done, as we suppose, in conformity to an Egyptian practice, were more unfit to be made a type or shadow of heavenly things, than the erection of an altar without steps;

\* Denique & hic caerimoniarum scopus fuit, ut rerum spiritualium figurae atque umbræ essent, & exstaret in iis artificiosa pictura Christi, ac gratiæ per ipsum impetrandæ—Non est autem probabile, Deum ex impiis Ægyptiorum ac diabolicis sacris, ex veteribus vanitatibus, ex magicæ artis imitamentis, picturas fecisse rerum spiritualium atque cœlestium. p. 289.

done, as they will allow, in direct opposition to Pagan practice. But it will be shewn under the next head, that the supposition that the Jewish Ritual was framed, partly in compliance to the people's prejudices, and partly in opposition to idolatrous superstitions, and, at the same time, typical of a future Dispensation, tends greatly to raise and enlarge our ideas of the divine Wisdom.

But it is strange, that such a writer as WITSIUS (whatever we may think of the admirers of his argument) should not see, that the character given of the RITUAL LAW by GOD himself did not imply that it had a mixture at least of no better stuff than Egyptian and other Pagan practices.

GOD, by the prophet EZEKIEL, upbraiding the Israelites with their perversity and disobedience, from the time of their going out of Egypt to their entrance into the land of Canaan, speaks to them in this manner.—

Ver. 1. “ And it came to pass, in the seventh  
“ year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of  
“ the month, that certain of the elders of Israel  
“ came to inquire of the Lord, and sat before  
“ me.

2. “ Then came the word of the Lord unto  
“ me saying.

3. “ Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord  
“ God, Are ye come to inquire of me? as I live,  
“ saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by  
“ you.

4. " Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt  
 " thou judge them? cause them to know the abo-  
 " minations of their fathers:

5. " And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord  
 " God, in the day when I chose Israel, and lifted  
 " up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Ja-  
 " cob, and made myself known unto them in the  
 " land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto  
 " them, saying I am the Lord your God.

6. " In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto  
 " them to bring them forth of the land of Egypt,  
 " into a land that I had espied for them, flowing  
 " with milk and honey, which is the glory of all  
 " lands:

7. " Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every  
 " man the abominations of his eyes, and defile  
 " not your selves with the idols of Egypt: I am  
 " the Lord your God.

8. " But they rebelled against me, and would  
 " not hearken unto me: they did not every man  
 " cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither  
 " did they forsake the idols of Egypt: Then I  
 " said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to  
 " accomplish my anger against them in the midst  
 " of the land of Egypt.

9. " But I wrought for my name's sake, that it  
 " should not be polluted before the heathen, a-  
 " mong whom they were, in whose sight I made  
 " myself known unto them, in bringing them  
 " forth out of the land of Egypt.

10. " Where-



10. " Wherefore I caused them to go forth out  
" of the land of Egypt, and brought them into  
" the wilderness.

11. " And I gave them my statutes, and shew-  
" ed them my judgments, which if a man do, he  
" shall even live in them.

12. " Moreover also, I gave them, my sabbaths,  
" to be a sign between me and them, that they  
" might know that I am the Lord that sanctify  
" them.

13. " But the house of Israel rebelled against  
" me in the wilderness: they walked not in my  
" statutes, and they despised my judgments,  
" which if a man do, he shall even live in them;  
" and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I  
" said I would pour out my fury upon them in  
" the wilderness to consume them.

14. " But I wrought for my name's sake, that  
" it should not be polluted before the heathen, in  
" whose sight I brought them out.

15. " Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them  
" in the wilderness, that I would not bring them  
" into the land which I had given them, flowing  
" with milk and honey, which is the glory of all  
" lands :

16. " Because they despised my judgments,  
" and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my  
" sabbaths : for their heart went after their idols.

17. " Never-

17. " Nevertheless, mine eye spared them from  
" destroying them, neither did I make an end of  
" them in the wilderness.

18. " But I said unto their children in the wil-  
" derness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fa-  
" thers, neither observe their judgments, nor de-  
" file yourselves with their idols.

19. " I am the Lord your God; walk in my  
" statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them:

20. " And hallow my sabbaths, and they shall  
" be a sign between me and you, that ye may  
" know that I am the Lord your God.

21. " Notwithstanding the children rebelled  
" against me: they walked not in my statutes,  
" neither kept my judgments to do them, which  
" if a man do, he shall even live in them; they  
" polluted my sabbaths: then I said I would pour  
" out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger  
" against them in the wilderness.

22. " Nevertheless, I withdrew mine hand, and  
" wrought for my names sake, that it should not  
" be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose  
" sight I brought them forth.

23. " I lifted up mine hand unto them also in  
" the wilderness, that I would scatter them among  
" the heathen, and disperse them through the  
" countries.

24. " Because they had not executed my judg-  
" ments, but had despised my statutes, and had  
" polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after  
" their fathers idols.

25. " WHEREFORE I GAVE THEM ALSO STATUTES THAT WERE NOT GOOD, AND JUDGMENTS WHEREBY THEY SHOULD NOT LIVE.

26. " And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass thro' the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord <sup>h</sup>."

Could the Prophet have possibly given a plainer or more graphical description of the character and genius of the RITUAL LAW, than in those last words? Yet to suit it to theologic purposes, System-makers have endeavoured, in their usual manner, to *interpret it away*, as if it only signified God's suffering the Israelites to fall into idolatry. Now if it were not indulged to these men to make use of any arms they can catch hold of, one should be a little scandalized to find that they had borrowed this forced interpretation from the RABBINS; who holding their Law to be perfect, and of eternal obligation, were indeed much concerned to remove this opprobrium from it. Kimchi is recorded for his dexterity in giving it this meaning: tho' done with much more caution than the christian writers who took it from him. He supposed that the *statutes not good* were the Tributes imposed on the Israelites while in subjection to their pagan neighbours. And this takes off something from the unnatural violence of the expression, of GIVING STATUTES, when understood only to signify the permission of abusing their free-will, when they fell into idolatry.

Now, because the right explanation and proper enforcement of this famous passage will, besides its

<sup>h</sup> Chap. xx, ver. 1. to 26, inclusive.

use



use in the present argument, serve for many considerable purposes, in the sequel of this work, it may not be time mispent to expose this spurious pilfered interpretation. And, as the last inforcer of it, and the most satisfied with his exploit, the late Author of the *Connexions between sacred and profane history*, takes the honour of it to himself, I shall examine his reasoning at large.

Dr. Spencer, and (I suppose) every capable judge before him, understood the *statutes and judgments* in the eleventh verse to signify the MORAL law; and the *statutes and judgments* in the twenty-fifth verse, to signify the RITUAL. But Dr. Shuckford, who always takes a singular pleasure in carping at that faithful Servant of Common-sense, directs the defence of his borrowed novelty, against the great Author of *the Reasons of the Ritual Law*, in the following manner.—“The persons spoken of, who had the *statutes given* to them, which were *not good*, were not that generation of men to whom the *whole Law* was given, but their children or posterity. To this posterity, God made no additions to his laws; the whole being completed in the time of their forefathers. Therefore all he GAVE to them of *statutes not good* was the PERMISSION of falling into the pagan idolatries round about.” This, I believe, his followers will confess to be his argument, tho’ represented in fewer words, yet with greater force: for a perplexed combination of needless repetitions, which fill two or three large pages, have much weakened and obscured his reasoning.

However it concludes in these very terms. “And thus it must be undeniably plain, that the Pro-

<sup>1</sup> Con. v. p. 159—161.

phet could not, by the *statutes not good* mean any part of the Ritual law: for the whole Law was given to the fathers of those whom the Prophet now speaks of; but *these statutes* were not given to the fathers, but to the descendants. If we go on, and compare the narrative of the Prophet with the history of the Israelites, we shall see further, that the *statutes and judgments not good* are so far from being any part of Moses's law, that they were not *given* earlier than the times of the Judges<sup>k</sup>; *i. e.* the Israelites then fell into the idolatries, here called (as this learned interpreter will have it) *statutes and judgments GIVEN*.

And now, to canvass a little this decisive argument——THUS (says he) *it must be undeniably plain——Thus!* that is, Grant him his premisses, and the conclusion follows. Without doubt. But the whole context shews that his premisses are false.

First then let it be observed, that the occasion of the Prophecy, in the xxth chapter of Ezekiel, was this,—The Jews, by certain of their Elders, had, as was usual in their distresses, recourse to the God of Israel for direction and assistance, [ver. 1.] On this we are informed, [ver. 3.] that the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, bidding him tell these Elders, that God would not be inquired of by them: for that their continued rebellions, from their coming out of Egypt, to that time, had made them unworthy of his patronage and protection. Their idolatries are then recapitulated, and divided into three periods. The FIRST, from God's message to them while in Egypt, to their entrance into the promised land.—*Thus saith*

<sup>k</sup> P. 161.

*the Lord God, In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, &c. and so on, from the fifth to the twenty-sixth verse inclusively. The SECOND period contains all the time from their taking possession of the land of Canaan, to their present condition when this prophecy was delivered.—Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me. For WHEN I HAD BROUGHT THEM INTO THE LAND, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, &c. and so on, from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-second verse inclusively. The THIRD period concerns the iniquities, and the consequent punishment of the present generation, which had now applied to him in their distresses.—As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, WILL I RULE OVER YOU, &c. And this is the subject of what we find between the thirty-third and the forty-fourth verse, inclusively.*

This short, but exact analysis of the Prophecy, is more than sufficient to overturn Dr. Shuckford's system, founded on a distinction between the *fathers* and the *children* in the eighteenth verse, (which is within the first period) as if the *fathers* related to what happened in the wilderness, and the *children*, to what happened under the judges; whereas common sense is sufficient to convince us, that the whole is confined to the two generations, between the exodus from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan.

But the confutation of a foolish system, dishonourable indeed to Scripture, is the least of my concern,



cern. Such things will die of themselves. My point, in delivering the truths of God as they lie in his Word, is to illustrate the amazing wisdom of that Dispensation to which they belong. Let me observe therefore, as a matter of much greater moment, that this distinction, which the text hath made between the FATHERS and the CHILDREN, in the first period, during their abode in the wilderness, affords us a very noble instance of that divine mercy which extends to *thousands*.

The Prophet thus represents the fact. When God brought his chosen people out of Egypt, *he gave them his statutes and shewed them his judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them. Moreover also he gave them his sabbaths, to be a sign between him and them*<sup>1</sup>. That is, he gave them the moral law of the Decalogue, in which there was one positive institution<sup>m</sup>, and no more; but this one, absolutely necessary as *the token of a covenant*, to be a perpetual memorial of it, and, by that means, to preserve them a select people, unmixed with the nations. What followed so gracious and generous a dispensation to the house of Israel? Why, *they rebelled against him in the wilderness: they walked not in his statutes, and they despised his judgments, and his Sabbaths they greatly polluted*<sup>n</sup>. On which, he threatened to *pour out his fury upon them in the wilderness, and consume them*<sup>o</sup>. But, in regard to his own glory, lest the Heathen, before whom he brought them out of Egypt, should blaspheme, he thought fit to spare them<sup>p</sup>. Yet so far punished that generation, as never to suffer them to come into the land of Canaan<sup>q</sup>. Their *children* he spared, that the race might not be consumed as he had first threatened<sup>r</sup>. And hoping better things of them

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 11, 12.<sup>m</sup> The Sabbath.<sup>n</sup> Ver. 13.<sup>o</sup> Ver. 16.<sup>p</sup> Ver. 14.<sup>q</sup> Ver. 16.<sup>r</sup> Ver. 17.

than

than of their Fathers, he said to them in the wilderness, *Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. Walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments and do them : and hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you* \*. Here we see, the Children, or immediate progeny, were again offered, as their sole rule of government, what had been given to, and had been violated by their Fathers; namely, the moral law of the Decalogue, and the positive institution of the Sabbath. Well, and how did they behave themselves on this occasion? Just as their fathers had done before them.—*Notwithstanding* [the repetition of this offered grace] *the Children rebelled against me, they walked not in my statutes, they polluted my Sabbaths* †—What followed? The same denunciation which had hung over the Fathers, utter destruction *in the wilderness* ‡. However, mercy again prevails over judgment; and the same reason for which he spared their Fathers inclines him to spare them; lest his name should be polluted in the sight of the heathen \*. However due punishment attended their transgressions, as it had done their Fathers'. Their Fathers left their bones in the wilderness: but this perverse race being pardoned, as a People, and still possessed of the privilege of a select and chosen Nation, were neither to be scattered amongst the Heathen, nor to be confined for ever in the wilderness: Almighty Wisdom therefore ordained that their punishment should be such, as should continue them, even against their Wills, a separated race, in possession of the land of Canaan. What this punishment was, the following words declare.—*Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes;*

\* Ver. 18, 19, 20.

† Ver. 21.

‡ Ver. 21.

§ Ver. 22.

*and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers idols, Wherefore I GAVE THEM ALSO STATUTES THAT WERE NOT GOOD, AND JUDGMENTS WHEREBY THEY SHOULD NOT LIVE*. That is, because they had violated my FIRST system of laws, the DECALOGUE, I added to them [I GAVE THEM ALSO, words which imply 'the giving as a supplement] my SECOND system, the RITUAL LAW; very aptly characterised (when set in opposition to the MORAL LAW) by *statutes that were not good, and by judgments whereby they should not live.*

What is here observed, opens to us the admirable reasons of both punishments: and why there was a forbearance, or a second trial, before the *yoke of the Ordinances* was imposed. For we must never forget, that the God of Israel transacted with his people according to the mode of human Governors. Let this be kept in mind, and we shall see the admirable progress of the Dispensation. God brought the *Fathers* out of Egypt, to put them in possession of the land of Canaan. He gave them the MORAL LAW to distinguish them for the worshippers of the true God: And he gave them the POSITIVE LAW of the Sabbath to distinguish them for God's peculiar people. These *Fathers* proving perverse and rebellious, their punishment was death in the wilderness, and exclusion from that good land which was reserved for their *Children*. But then these *Children*, in that very Wilderness, the scene of their Fathers' crime and calamity, fell into the same transgressions. What was now to be done? It was plain, so inveterate an evil could be only checked or subdued by the curb of some severe Institution. A severe Institution was prepared; and the RITUAL LAW was

Ver. 24, 25.

established.



established. For the first offence, the punishment was *personal*: but when a repetition shewed it to be inbred, and, like the Leprosy, sticking to the whole race, the punishment was properly changed to *national*.

How clear, how coherent, is every thing, as here explained! How consonant to reason! How full of divine wisdom! Yet, in defiance of Scripture and Common-sense (which have a closer connexion than the Enemies of religion suspect, or than the common advocates of it dare venture to maintain) comes a Doctor, and tells us, that these *Children in the Wilderness* of the time of Moses, were *Children of the land of Canaan* in the time of the Judges; and that the *statutes given* which were *not good*, were pagan idolatries, *not given*, but *suffered*; indeed *not suffered*; because severely, and almost always immediately punished.

What misled our Doctor (whose *Connexions*, by what we have seen, appear to be little better than a *chain* of errors) seems to have been this, The *Ritual law* was given during the life of the *Fathers*, and soon after their transgression mentioned in the 13th ver. of this Prophecy. So he could not conceive how the Prophet should mean that this Law was given to the *Children*. But he did not consider, that the proper punishment of the *Fathers* was extinction in the wilderness: the proper punishment of the *Children*, who were reserved to possess the holy land, was the infliction of the RITUAL LAW.

The Dr. however, notwithstanding all his complacency in this his adopted system, yet appears conscious of its want of strength; for he owns that an objection may be made to it from the following words of the Prophecy.—*But I said unto their Children*

*Children IN THE WILDERNES, Walk ye not in the statutes of your Fathers—walk in my statutes—and hallow my Sabbath*<sup>a</sup>. And again, of these Children—*then I said I would pour out my fury upon them to accomplish mine anger against them IN THE WILDERNESS*<sup>a</sup>. And again,—*I lifted up my hand unto them also IN THE WILDERNESS*<sup>b</sup>. “Here” (says the learned Doctor) the prophet may SEEM “TO HINT, that God’s anger against the Children “was while they were in the wilderness.”

*May seem to hint!* The Dr. must be immoderately fond of precise expression when he esteems this to be no more than a *hint* or doubtful intimation.

But MOSES having omitted to tell us, that these Children did indeed play these pranks *in the Wilderness*, he will not take a later Prophet’s word for it. *As Moses* (says the Doctor) *wrote before Ezekiel prophesied; his prophesy could not alter facts*. It will be more than the Doctor deserves, if the Freethinker neglects to reply, that both the Prophet, and the Doctor here *seem to hint*; the former, *that God’s anger against the Children was while they were in the wilderness*; the latter, that Moses and Ezekiel contradict one another. But to let this pass.—*Prophecy* he says, *could not alter facts*; by which he means that Prophecy, any more than the author of Prophecy, could not make that to be undone which was already done. Who ever thought it could? But might not Ezekiel’s Prophecy explain facts, and relate them too, which a former Prophet had omitted? However Ezekiel is not the only one who informs us of this fact. Amos upbraids these

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 18, 19, 20.  
<sup>c</sup> P. 169.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 21.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 23.

sojourners *in the wilderness* with a still more general apostacy. "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings IN THE WILDERNESS forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have born the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the Star of your God, which ye made to your selves." Now if the Israelites committed idolatry all the time they sojourned in the Wilderness, the crime necessarily included the CHILDREN with the *Fathers*,

The Doctor's second expedient to evade the determinate evidence of the text is as ridiculous as the first is extravagant. The text says,—*I will pour out my fury upon them to accomplish mine anger against them* IN THE WILDERNESS.—"These words, *in the wilderness*, (says the acute Expositor) do not hint the place where the *anger* was to be *accomplished*, but rather refer to *anger*, and suggest the *anger* to be, as if we might almost say in English, THE WILDERNESS-ANGER".—If the Doctor's Rhetoric is to be enriched with this new phrase, I think his Logic should not be denied the benefit of a like acquisition, of which it will have frequent use, and that is, WILDERNESS-REASONING. And so much for this learned solution.

But the absurdity of supposing, with these men, that the words, *I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live*, might signify, their *taking* (without *giving*) *Baal and Astartoth for their Gods*<sup>†</sup>, is best exposed by the Prophet himself, as his words lie in the text. Consider then the case of these Rebels. God's first intention, (as in the other case of their Fathers' rebellion) is represented to be the renouncing them

† Chap. v. 25, 26.

‡ P. 171;

§ P. 163.



for his people, and scattering them amongst the nations. *Then I said I would pour out my fury upon them to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness<sup>g</sup>.* But his mercy prevails.—*Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my names sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the Heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth<sup>h</sup>.* In these two verses, we see, that the punishment intended, and the mercy shewn, are delivered in general; without the circumstances of the punishment, or the conditions of the mercy. The three following verses, in the mode of the eastern composition, which delights in repetition, informs us more particularly of these *circumstances*, which were DISPERSION, &c. and of these *conditions*, which were the imposition of a *Ritual Law*.—*I lifted up my hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would SCATTER THEM amongst the heathen, and DISPERSE THEM thro' the countries; because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their Fathers' idols<sup>i</sup>.* Here, the intended punishment is explained specifically, that is, with its circumstances. — The mercy follows; and the terms, on which it was bestowed, are likewise explained.—*Wherefore I gave them also Statutes that were NOT GOOD, and Judgments whereby they should NOT LIVE<sup>k</sup>.* And now the beggarly shifts of the new interpretation appear in all their nakedness. Whatever is meant by *statutes not good*, the end of giving them, we see, was to preserve them a peculiar people to the Lord; for the punishment of dispersion was remitted to them. But if by *statutes not good* be meant the permitting them to fall into Idolatries, God is absurdly represented as decreeing an *end*; (the

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 21.<sup>h</sup> Ver. 22.<sup>i</sup> Ver. 23, 24.<sup>k</sup> Ver. 25.  
keeping

Sect. 6. of MOSES demonstrated. 93

keeping his people separate) and at the same time providing *means* to defeat it : For every lapse into idolatry was a step to their disperſion and *utter conſumption*, by abſorbing them into the Nations. We muſt needs conclude therefore, that, by STATUTES NOT GOOD is meant the RITUAL LAW, the only means of attaining that end of mercy, The preſerving them a ſeparate people.

Who now can chuſe but ſmile to hear our learned Expoſitor quoting theſe words of the book of Judges,—*The CHILDREN of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the Lord, and followed other Gods of the Gods of the people, that were round about them, and provoked the Lord to anger and ſerved Baal, and Aſhteroth*<sup>1</sup>; and then gravely adding, — “ So that here “ the ſcene opens which Ezekiel alludes to; and “ accordingly, what Ezekiel mentions as the puniſhment of theſe wickedneſſes began now to “ come upon them.”

However, it muſt be owned, that if words alone could ſhake the ſolidity of the interpretation, I have here given, theſe which immediately follow the conteſted paſſage of *ſtatutes not good*, would be enough to alarm us — *And I polluted them* (ſays the text) *in their own gifts, in that they cauſed to paſs thro’ the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them deſolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord*”. The common interpretation of which is this, “ I permitted them to fall into that “ wicked inhumanity, whereby they were polluted and contaminated, in making their Children “ to paſs through the fire to Moloch, in order to “ root them out and utterly to deſtroy them.”

<sup>1</sup> Cap. ii. ver. 11, 12, 13.      <sup>m</sup> P. 163.      <sup>a</sup> Ver. 26.

Dr. Spencer (who follows the general sense of the prophesy which I have here explained and supported) appeared but too sensible how much this text stood in his way. He endeavours therefore to shew, that "it relates to God's rejecting the first born of the Israelites from the priesthood, and appointing the tribe of Levi to the sacred office in their stead:" and that, therefore, the verse should be rendred thus, *I pronounced them polluted in their gifts*, [i. e. unfit to offer me any oblation] *in that I passed by all that openeth the womb* [i. e. the first-born] *in order to humble them that they might know that I am the Lord.* And this rendering may be the right, for any thing Dr. Shuckford has to oppose to the contrary<sup>o</sup>; the main of which is, what has been already confuted; (or rather, what the very terms, in which the assertion is advanced, do themselves confute) namely, that *the Children in the wilderness* were not the immediate issue of those who died *in the wilderness*, but a remote posterity. As for his hebrew criticism, that the word *maas*, and not *nabar*, would probably have been used by the Prophet, if *rejecting from the priesthood* had been the sense intended by him<sup>o</sup>, this is the slenderest of all reasoning, even tho' it had been applied to a Rhetorician by profession, and in a language very copious, and perfectly well understood: How evanid is it therefore, when applied to a Prophet under the impulse of inspiration, and speaking in the most scanty of all languages; the small knowledge of which is to be got from one single volume of no large bulk, and conveyed in a mode of writing subject to perpetual equivocations and ambiguities! From the mischiefs of which, God in his good providence preserved us by the



Septuagint Translation, made while the Hebrew was a living language, and afterwards authenticated by the recognition of the inspired writers of the New Testament.

However the truth is, that this explanation of the learned Spencer must appear forced, even tho' we had no better to oppose to it: But when there is a better at hand, which not only takes off all the countenance which this 26th verse affords to Dr. Shuckford's interpretation of *Statutes not good*, but so exactly quadrates with the sense, here given, that it completes and perfects the narrative, we shall be no longer frightened with its formidable look.

To understand then what it aims at, we must consider the context as it has been explained above. The 21st and 22d verses (it hath been shewn) contain God's purposes of *judgment* and of *mercy* in general. The 23d, 24th and 25th explain in what the intended *judgment* would have consisted, and how the prevailing *mercy* was qualified. The Israelites were to be pardoned; but to be kept under, by the yoke of a ritual Law, described only in general by the title of *statutes not good*. The 26th verse opens the matter still further, and explains the nature and genius of that yoke, together with its effects, both salutary and baleful. The *salutary*, as it was a barrier to idolatry, the most enormous species of which was that of *causing their children to pass through the fire to Moloch*: the *baleful*, as it brought on their *desolation* when they became deprived of the Temple-worship. But to be more particular.—*I polluted them in their own gifts*. By *gifts* I understand that homage, (universally expressed, in the ancient world, by Rites of

of sacrifice) which a People owed to their God. And how were these *gifts polluted*? By a multifarious Ritual, which being opposed to the idolatries; of the Nations, was prescribed in reference to those idolatries; and, consequently, was incumbered with a thousand Ceremonies, respecting the choice of the animal; the qualities and purifications of the Sacrificers; and the direction and efficacy of each specific Offering. This account of their *pollution*, by such a Ritual, exactly answers to the character given of that Ritual, [*Statutes not good, &c.*] in the text in question. Then follows the reason of God's thus *polluting them in their own gifts*—*in that* [or, because that] *they caused to pass thro' the fire all that openeth the womb*—i. e. the *polluting* Ritual was imposed as a PUNISHMENT FOR, as well as BARRIER TO their idolatries; characterised under this most enormous and horrid of them all, the causing of their children *to pass thro' the fire to Moloch*. Then follows the humiliating circumstance of this ritual yoke,—*that I might make them desolate*, i. e. that they should, even from the nature of that Ritual, be deprived, when they most wanted it, of their nearest intercourse with their God and King. A real state of *desolation*! To understand which, we are to consider, that at the time this Prophecy was delivered, the Jews, by their accumulated iniquities were accelerating, what doubtless the Prophet had then in his eye, their punishment of the seventy years Captivity. Now, by the peculiar Constitution of the ritual Law, their Religion became, as it were, local; it being unlawful to offer sacrifice but in the temple of Jerusalem only. So that when they were led captive into a foreign land, the most solemn and essential intercourse between God and them, (*the morning and evening Sacrifice*) was entirely cut off: and thus, by means of the ritual Law they were emphatically  
said

said to be *made desolate*. The verse concludes in telling us, for what end this punishment was inflicted—*that they might know that I am the Lord*. How would this appear from the premisses? Very evidently. For if, while they were in Captivity, they were under an interdict, and their Religion in a state of Suspension, and yet that they were to continue God's select people, (for the scope of the whole Prophecy is to shew, that, notwithstanding all their provocations, God still *worked for his names sake*) then, in order to be restored to their Religion, they were to be reinstated in their own Land: which work, Prophecy always describes as the utmost manifestation of God's power. Their redemption from the *Assyrian* captivity particularly, being frequently compared, by the Prophets, to that of the *Egyptian*. From hence therefore all men *might know* and collect, that the God of Israel *was the Lord*.

This famous text then, we see, may be thus aptly paraphrased — *And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass thro' the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord.* i. e. “ I loaded the religious Worship due to me, as their God and King, with a number of operose Ceremonies, to punish their past and to oppose to their future, idolatries; the most abominable of which was their making their children to pass through the fire to Moloch: And further, that I might have the Ceremonial Law always at hand as an instrument for still more severe punishments, when the full measure of their iniquities should bring them into Captivity in a strange land, I so contrived, by the very constitution of their Religion, that it should then remain



under an interdict, and all stated intercourse be cut off between me and them: From which evil, would necessarily arise this advantage, an occasion to manifest my power to the Gentiles, in bringing my People again, after a due time of penance, into their own land."

Here we see, the text, thus expounded, connects and compleats the whole narrative, concerning the imposition of the ritual Law, and its nature and consequences, from the 21st to the 26th verse inclusively: and opens the history of it by due degrees, which the most just and elegant compositions require. We are first informed of the threatened judgment, and of the prevailing mercy in general:—we are then told the specific nature of that judgment, and the circumstance attending the accorded mercy;—and lastly, the Prophet explains the nature and genius of that attendant circumstance; together with its adverse as well as benignant effects.

I have now deprived the CONNECTER of all his arguments but one, for this strange interpretation of *Statutes not good*; and that one is, "That the worshipers of *Baal* and *Asheroth*, in the book of Judges, and the slaves to *statutes not good* in the prophet Ezekiel, having the common name of CHILDREN, must needs be the same individuals:" But this I make a conscience of taking from him.

Yet such confidence has the learned person in his goodly exposition, that he concludes his reasoning against the obvious sense of the Prophecy, in this extraordinary manner — "Dr. Spencer  
"imagined, this text alone was sufficient to sup-  
"port

“ port his hypothesis: but I cannot but think, if  
 “ what has been offered be fairly considered, NO  
 “ HONEST WRITER can ever cite it again for that  
 “ purpose.”

What is Dr. Spencer's hypothesis? Just this and no other, that *Moses gave the ritual Law to the Jews because of the hardness of their hearts*; the very Hypothesis of Jesus Christ himself.

But the CONNECTER thinks, that, *if what he has offered be fairly considered*, NO HONEST WRITER can ever cite it again for that purpose. This smells strong of the Bigot. One can hardly think one's self in the closet of a learned and sober Divine; but rather in some wild Conventicle of Methodists or Hutchinsonians; whose criticisms are all Revelations: which, tho' you cannot embrace but at the expence of COMMON SENSE, you are not allowed to question without renouncing COMMON HONESTY.

I have *fairly considered* (as the *Connector* expects his Reader should do) *what he has offered against Dr. Spencer's hypothesis*; and if there be any truth in the conclusions of human reason, I think a writer may go on very advantageously, as well as with a good conscience, to defend *that Hypothesis*. How such a writer shall be qualified by Bigots, is another point. Many an HONEST MAN, I am persuaded, will still adhere to Dr. *Shuckford's hypothesis*; and with the same good faith, with which he himself supported it: for tho' his charity will not allow that title to those who dissent from him, yet God forbid, that I should not give it to Him.

But it is now time to proceed to the *third period* of THIS Prophecy. For the principal design of this work is to vindicate and illustrate sacred Scripture, tho' in my progress I be still obliged, from time to time, to stop a little, while I remove the most material obstructions which lie in my way.

This Prophecy hitherto contains a declaration of the various punishments inflicted on the rebellious Israelites, from the time of Moses's mission, to the preaching of Ezekiel. We have shewn that their punishment in the first period, was *death in the wilderness*: their punishment in the second period, was *the fastening on their necks the yoke of the ritual Law*.

Their punishment in the *third period* is now to be considered: and we shall see that it consisted in rendering the yoke of the ritual Law still more galling, by withdrawing from them that EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE, which once rewarded the studious observers of it, with many temporal blessings. The punishment was dreadful: and such, indeed, the Prophet describes it to have been. But we may be assured, their crimes deserved it, as having risen in proportion with it; and this likewise, he tells us, was the case. Their idolatries were at first, and so, for some time they continued to be, the mixing Pagan worship with the worship of the God of Israel. But tho' they had so often smarted for this folly, they were yet so besotted with the Gods of the nations, *the stocks and stones of the high places*, that their last progress in impiety was the project of casting off the God of Israel entirely, at least as their TUTELAR God, and of mixing themselves amongst the Nations. They had experienced, that the *God of Israel* was a JEALOUS  
GOD,



God, who would not share his glory with another; and they hoped to avoid his wrath by renouncing their Covenant with him, and leaving him at liberty to chuse another people. To such a degree of impiety and madness was this devoted Nation arrived, when Ezekiel prophesied at the eve of their approaching Captivity. All this will be made plain, by what follows.

We have seen their behaviour in the two former periods; in EGYPT, and in the WILDERNESS. The third begins with a description of their Manners when they had taken possession of the land of CANAAN.

Ver. 27. " Son of man, speak unto the house  
" of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the  
" Lord God, yet in this, your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me.

28. " For when I had brought them into the  
" land, for the which I lifted up my hand to give  
" it to them, then they saw every high hill, and  
" all the thick trees, and they offered there their  
" sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering."

This was their continual practice, even to the delivery of this Prophecy; at which time, their enormities were come to the height, we just mentioned; to contrive in their hearts to renounce the God of Israel, altogether. But being surrounded with calamities, and a powerful enemy at their door, they were willing to procure a present relief from him, whom they had so much offended; tho' at this very instant, they were projecting to offend

still more. The singular impudence of this conduct was, apparently, the immediate occasion of this famous Prophecy; as we shall now see.

Ver. 30. "Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredoms after their abominations?"

31. "For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute your selves with all your idols EVEN TO THIS DAY. And shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you."

That this recourse to the God of their Fathers was only a momentary impulse, arising from their pressing necessities, is evident from what immediately follows; the mention of that specific crime which brought upon them the punishment annexed to the third period. —

Ver. 32. "AND THAT WHICH COMETH INTO YOUR MIND SHALL NOT BE AT ALL, THAT YE SAY, WE WILL BE AS THE HEATHEN, AS THE FAMILIES OF THE COUNTRIES, TO SERVE WOOD AND STONE."

33. "As I live saith the Lord God, Surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, AND WITH FURY POURED OUT, WILL I RULE OVER YOU."

34. "AND I WILL BRING YOU OUT FROM THE PEOPLE, AND WILL GATHER YOU OUT OF THE COUNTRIES WHEREIN YE ARE SCATTERED, with a mighty



“ a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm,  
 “ AND WITH FURY POURED OUT.

35. “ And I will bring you into the WILDERNESS  
 “ OF THE PEOPLE, and there will I plead with you  
 “ face to face.

36. “ Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the  
 “ *wilderness* of the land of Egypt, so will I plead  
 “ with you face to face.”

By all this it appears, that the Jews of this time were little anxious to *avoid* their approaching Captivity, denounced and threatened by all their Prophets. What they wanted was a light and easy servitude, which might enable them to mingle with, and at last, to be lost amongst the Nations; like the ten Tribes which had gone before them. Against the vileness of these hopes is this part of the Prophecy directed. God assures them, he will bring them out of the *Assyrian* Captivity, as he had done out of the *Egyptian*; but not in mercy, as that deliverance was procured, but in judgment, and *with fury poured out*. And as he had brought their Fathers into the *wilderness of the land of Egypt*, so would he bring them into the WILDERNESS OF THE PEOPLE, that is, the land of Canaan, which they would find, on their return to it, was become desert and uninhabited; and therefore elegantly called, the *wilderness of the people*. But what now was to be their reception, on their second possession of the promised Land? a very different welcome from the first. God indeed leads them here again with a *mighty hand and a stretched out arm*; and it was to take possession; but not, as at first, of a *land flowing with milk and honey*, but of a prison, a house of correction where

H 4

they



they were to pass under the rod, and to remain in bonds.

37. "AND I WILL CAUSE YOU (says God) TO PASS UNDER THE ROD, AND I WILL BRING YOU INTO THE BOND OF THE COVENANT."

Words which strongly and elegantly express subjection to a ritual Law, after the extraordinary Providence, which so much alleviated the yoke of it, was withdrawn: And we find it withdrawn soon after their return from the Captivity.—But, the Prophecy, carrying on the comparison to the Egyptian deliverance, adds—

Ver. 38. "And I will purge out from amongst you, the Rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel."

These *Rebels*, like their FATHERS *in the wilderness*, were indeed to be brought out of Captivity, but were never to enjoy the promised Land; and the rest, like the CHILDREN *in the wilderness*, were to have the yoke of the ritual Law still made more galling. And thus the COMPARISON is completed.

These were the three different punishments inflicted in these three different periods. The first PERSONAL; the second and the third, NATIONAL; only the third made heavier than the second, in proportion to their accumulated offences.

But as, in the height of God's vengeance on the sins of this wretched people, the distant prospect always terminated in a mercy; So, with a mercy,  
and

and a promise of better times, the whole of this prophetic Scene is closed; in order that the NATION to which it is addressed, should, however criminal they were, not be left in an utter state of desperation, but be afforded some shadow of repose, in the prospect of future peace and tranquillity. For now, turning again to these *temporary Inquirers* after God, the Prophecy addresses them, in this manner,

Ver. 39. "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: But pollute you my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols."

As much as to say, Go on no longer in this divided worship; halt no more between two opinions; if Baal be your God, serve him; if the God of Israel, then serve him only. The reason follows.

Ver. 40.—43. "For in mine holy mountain—there shall all the house of Israel—serve me. There will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings—with all your holy things—and there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings wherein ye have been defiled, AND YE SHALL LOTHE YOURSELVES IN YOUR OWN SIGHT."—i. e. "For then, a new order of things shall commence. My people, after their return from the Captivity, shall be as averse to idolatry, as till then they were prone and disposed to it: and the memory of their former follies shall make them lothe themselves in their own sight." And this, indeed, was the fact, as we learn by their whole history, from their restoration to their own Land, quite down to the present hour.

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The idea of MERCY is naturally attached to that of repentance and reformation; and with MERCY the Prophecy concludes.

Ver. 44. "And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have wrought with you for my name's sake; not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

The Reader hath now a full explanation of the whole Prophecy: whereby he may understand how justly it hath required its eminent celebrity. Its general subject being no less than the Fate and Fortunes of the Jewish Republic: of which the several parts are so important; so judiciously chosen, so elegantly disposed, and so nobly enounced, that we see the divinity of the original, in every step we take.

But to return to the peculiar purpose of this Comment. Which is given to shew, that God himself has delivered the ritual Law of the Jews, under the character of *Statutes that were not good, and Judgments, whereby they should not live*.\*

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\* That very able interpreter of Scripture, father Houbigant, understands these words of the Prophet as spoken of the Jewish Law. "Itaque in præceptis non bonis intelligendæ veniunt ejusmodi leges quæ ad pœnam propositæ erant, non ad mercedem; quales erant leges de suppliciis, de aquis ab uxore suspectæ pudicitæ bibendis, de leprosis ab hominum cœtu arcendis, et aliæ quædam, quæ ab irato Legislatore proficisci videbantur." *In loc.* This learned person was too well versed in the style of Scripture, in the subject of the Prophecy, and in the history of the Jews, to imagine, when God speaks in the character of Legislator, of giving *Statutes and Judgments*, that he meant the general permission of divine Providence to suffer a people to fall into a number of senseless



The use I would make of it against WITSIUS, with whom I have been concerned, is to shew, that, if such be the genius of the ritual Law, it is no wonder it should have, in its composition, an alloy of no better materials, than Egyptian and other pagan Ceremonies; cleansed indeed and refined from their immoralities and superstitions: And conversely, that a composition of such an alloy was very aptly characterised by *Statutes not good, and Judgments whereby they could not live.*

Thus having before seen what little force there was in Witsius's arguments, and now understanding how little reason he had to be so tenacious of his opinion, the reader may think he scarce merited the distinction of being recommended to a learned Body as the very bulwark of the faith, in this matter. But let what will become of his arguments, he deserves honour for a much better thing than orthodox disputation: I mean, for an honest turn of mind averse to imputing odious designs to his adversaries, or dangerous consequences to their opinions<sup>†</sup>.

On

less and idolatrous practices. Indeed, a little to soften the character given of *Statutes not good*, he supposes they were thus qualified on account of their being *penal Laws*: and so makes what I understand to be a representation of the moral genius of the ritual Law in general, only the physical quality of some particular Rites. But the very words of the Prophecy evince that a Body of laws was meant; and the character of the Speaker shews, that the subject is of *moral*, not of *physical* good and evil.

<sup>†</sup> Speaking of MARSHAM and SPENCER, he says: In omnium nunc fere eruditorum manibus versatur Nobilissimi Viri Johannis Marshami CANON CHRONICUS. Opus quantivis pretii; quod uti Authori suo multa lectione, accurata meditatione, plurimisque lucubrationibus stetit, ita Lectori per salebrosos obscurissimæ

On the whole then, we conclude, both against  
 DEIST and BELIEVER, that the Ritual Law's  
 being

rissimæ Antiquitatis recessus viam non paullo faciliorem expeditioremque effecit. Sed ut in humanis rebus nihil omni ex parte beatum esse solet, ita nec pulcherrimo huic corpori suos deesse nævos videas — Eandem sententiam magno nuper animo atque apparatu tuitus est Johannes Spencerus in Dissertatione *de Urim & Thumim*. Ubi ita vir doctissimus instituit, &c. — Multa a viris doctissimis congesta sunt, quibus huic suæ assertioni fidem faciant. Ea autem quum plurimum reconditæ contineant eruditionis, non videntur Clarissimi Authores sua laude, uti nec studiosi lectores jucunditate atque utilitate, quæ exinde percipi potest, fraudandi esse. — Super omnibus denique *inimicis* meam subjungam, eo argumentorum robore quod suscepti negotii ratio patitur firmandam. Nequaquam ea mente ut doctissimorum virorum laboribus detrahā; sed ut me & Lectores meos in investiganda veritate exerceam, sit forte detur curva corrigere & egregio imperfōs abstergere corpore nævos, p. 1—4. This candour was the more extraordinary, as Sir J. Marsham had given but too many marks of disaffection to revealed Religion. And though that great and good man Dr. Spencer was entirely free from all reasonable suspicion of this kind; yet, it must be owned, that too intent on a favourite argument, he was apt to express himself somewhat crudely. He had a bright and vigorous imagination, which, now and then, got the better of his judgment; and the integrity of his heart made him careless in giving it the reins; sometimes in a dangerous road. Thus, for instance, in his fine discourse concerning *Prodigies*, speaking of a certain quality in the soul, which, as he says, makes it *greatly impressiv* to the persuasion of parallels, equalities, similitudes, in the frame and government of the world, he goes on in this strange manner, "This general temper of the soul easily inclines it to believe great and mighty changes in states, usher'd with the solemnity of some mighty and analogous changes in nature, and that all terrible evils are prefac'd or attended with some prodigious and amazing alterations in the creation — Hence, perhaps, it is that we generally find great troubles and judgments on earth described especially by persons *ecstatical, Prophets and Poets* (whose speeches usually rather follow the easy sense of the soul than the rigid truth of things) by all the examples of horror and confusion in the frame of the creation. The prophet David describes God's going out to judgment thus," &c. p. 71, 72. 2d ed. Dr. Spencer seems to have been misled in this philosophic solution



being made in reference to Egyptian superstition is no reasonable objection to the divinity of its original.

But the Deist may object, "That though indeed, when the Israelites were once deeply infected with that superstition, such a ritual might be necessary to stop and cure a growing evil; yet as the remedy was so multiplex, burdensome, and slavish, and therefore not in itself eligible, how happened it, that God, who had this family under his immediate and peculiar care, should suffer them to contract an infection which required so inconvenient and impure a remedy?"

I have been so accustomed to find the strongest objections of infidelity end in the stronger recommendation of revealed Religion, that I have never been backward, either to produce what they have said, when they write their best, or to imagine what they would say, if they knew how to write better. To

tion by a greater Master, who however, talks still more grossly of what he seems to have understood as little. "In matters of faith and religion (says lord Verulam) we raise our imagination above our reason: which is the cause why Religion sought ever access to the mind by similitudes, types, parables, visions, dreams." *Adv. of learning*, b. 2d. The serious christian reader cannot but be offended at this injurious representation of the holy Prophets. Such remarks as these are altogether unworthy these two excellent men. It is false in fact that Prophetic figures were enthusiastic or fantastic visions raised by, and then represented to, the imagination. I have shewn that the images, which the Prophets employed, composed the common phraseology of their times; and were employed by them because this figurative language was well understood, and still better relished by the People. [See p. 111. of this vol.] — But is it therefore fitting that such writers should be treated, by every dirty scribbler, as Libertines, Deists, and secret propagators of Infidelity, for inadvertencies, which a man like the candid Witius would only call *Nævi in pulcherrimo corpore*?

this



this therefore I reply, That the promise God had made to Abraham, to give his posterity the land of Canaan, could not be performed till that Family was grown strong enough to take and keep possession of it. In the mean time, therefore, they were necessitated to reside amongst idolaters. And we have seen, altho' they resided unmixed, how violent a propensity they ever had to join themselves to the gentile Nations, and to practise their Manners. God, therefore, in his infinite wisdom brought them into Egypt, and kept them there during this period; the only place where they could remain, for so long a time, safe and unconfounded with the natives; the ancient Egyptians being, by numerous institutions, forbidden all fellowship with strangers; and bearing besides, a particular aversion to the profession<sup>a</sup> of this Family. Thus we see, that the natural disposition of the Israelites, which, in Egypt, occasioned their superstitions; and in consequence, the necessity of a burthensome Ritual, would, in any other Country, have absorbed them in Gentilism and confounded them with Idolaters. From this objection, therefore, nothing comes but a new occasion to adore the footsteps of eternal Wisdom in his Dispensations to his chosen People.

## III.

The last proposition is, *That the very circumstances of Moses's Egyptian learning, and the Laws instituted in compliance to the people's prejudices, and in opposition to Egyptian superstitions, are a strong confirmation of the divinity of his mission.*

EGYPT was the great School of legislation for the rest of Mankind. And so revered were her

<sup>a</sup> The profession of Shepherds.

Sect. 6. of MOSES *demonstrated.* III

oracular dictates, that foreign Lawgivers, who went thither for instruction, never ventured to deviate from those fundamental principles of Government which she prescribed. In RELIGION, particularly, which always made a part of civil Policy, they so closely adhered to Egyptian maxims, that Posterity, as we have seen, were deceived into an opinion that the greek Lawgivers had received their very Gods from thence.

What therefore must we think had been the case of a Native of Egypt; bred up, from his infancy in Egyptian wisdom, and, at length, become a member of their Legislative body? would such a man, when going to frame a civil Policy and Religion (though we suppose nothing of that natural affection, which the best and wisest men have ever borne for their own country institutions) be at all inclined to deviate from its fundamental principles of Government?

Yet here we have in Moses, according to our Adversaries' account of him, a mere human Lawgiver, come fresh out of the Schools of Egypt, to reduce a turbulent People into Society, acting on fundamental principles of Religion and Policy directly opposite to all the maxims of Egyptian Wisdom.

One of the chief of which, in the RELIGIOUS POLICY of Egypt, was, That the government of the World had, by the supreme Ruler of the universe, been committed into the hands of subordinate, local, tutelary Deities; amongst whom the several Regions of the earth were shared out and divided: that these were the true and proper objects of all public and popular Religion; and that the



knowledge of the ONE TRUE GOD, the Creator of all things, was highly dangerous to be communicated to the People; but was to be secreted, and shut up in their MYSTERIES; and in them, to be revealed only occasionally, and to a few; and those few, the wise, the learned, and ruling part of mankind\*. Now, in plain defiance and contempt of this most venerable Principle, our Egyptian Lawgiver rejects these doctrines of inferior Deities, as impostures, and *lying vanities*; and boldly and openly preaches up to the People, the belief of the ONE TRUE GOD, the Creator, as the sole object of the Religion of all mankind†.

Another

\* See an account of these MYSTERIES in the first volume.

† Let me here observe how this very circumstance, in Moses's conduct, acquits him of all suspicion of that kind of FRAUD so much in use amongst the best human Lawgivers of Antiquity. The Mosaic Dispensation had been treated by our Freethinkers with great liberties. It was therefore offered by the late learned and ingenious Dr. Middleton, as a means to rescue it from their contempt, and to solve the difficulties which attend it, without hurting the authority whereon it stands, to suppose SOME DEGREE OF FICTION in certain cases, in the Mosaic writings. And this he endeavoured to make credible, from the practice of the ancient Lawgivers. Now I think this supposition neither true nor probable. 1. If we consider what it was that induced the ancient Lawgivers to employ *fiction*, we shall find it arose, in part, from their false pretences to a divine Mission; and, in part, from the imaginary necessity of propagating Polytheism. As to the first, Moses's pretensions to a divine mission are here allowed. And it is notorious that he preached up the one true God, the Creator, in opposition to all kinds of Polytheism. No occasion therefore remained for the use of *fiction*. And we can hardly think he would employ it without occasion. What we have then to shew is, that the only cause why the ancient sages employed *fiction* (besides the support of a false mission) was to hide the absurdities of Polytheism. This indeed hath been already done for other purposes, in several places of this Work: So that I shall here confine myself to one single proof. Macrobius assures us, that the ancient sages did not admit the fabulous  
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Another fundamental maxim, in the RELIGIOUS POLICY of Egypt, was to propagate, by every kind of

in all their disputations; but in those only which related to the SOUL, to the HEAVENLY BODIES, and to the HERO-GODS. Sciendum est tamen non in omnem disputationem philosophos admittere *fabuloso* vel *licita*, sed his uti solent cum vel de animâ, vel de AERIIS ÆTHERIISVE POTESTATIBUS, vel de CETERIS DIS loquuntur. [in Som. Scrip. l. i. c. 2.] On the contrary, when they discoursed of the FIRST CAUSE, then every thing was delivered exactly agreeable to truth. Ceterum cum ad SUMMUM ET PRINCIPEM OMNIUM DEUM — tractatus se audet attollere — NIHIL FABULOSUM penitus attingunt. [*id. ib.*] The reason of their using *fiction* or *fable*, in treating of their false Gods, was to hide the absurdities attendant on their Worship; a Worship thought to be necessary. Hence, as hath been shewn elsewhere, [vol. i. of the Div. Leg. b. iii. sect. 6.] they were led from the *absurdity* and the *necessity* together, to conclude *that utility, and not truth, was the end of Religion*; and from another mistake there mentioned, *that utility and truth do not coincide*. From these two principles necessarily arose a third, *that it was expedient and lawful to deceive for the Public good*. And, on this last, was founded the practice of *fiction* above-mentioned. Now the whole Religion of Moses being established on that very doctrine, in the handling of which the ancient Sages neither needed nor used *fiction*; and at the same time directly opposing that very superstition, for the sake of which, the *fiction* was employed; we conclude, with certainty, that Moses employed NO DEGREE OF FICTION in the composition or in the propagation of the Jewish Religion. But 2. That which he had no occasion to use, we think it impossible he should use, if his pretensions were (as is here allowed) real. We have, indeed, in order to display the wisdom of God's Dispensation, endeavoured to shew that he employed, in the contrivance of it, all those arts (though in an infinitely more perfect degree) which human Lawgivers are wont to use, in the legitimate exercise of civil Government: for that, without forcing the Will, no other method was sufficient to accomplish the end designed. But this, we presume, is as different from *fiction* as truth is from falsehood. Thus far, we think, God, in his dispensations to men, would chuse to do, rather than to force the Will. But could we suppose a People, favoured with a divine Revelation, so absurdly circumstanced as to be incapable of being worked upon by common means, without the use of *some degree of fiction*, we should then conclude God would rather chuse mira-

of method, the doctrine of A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS; as the necessary support of all Religion and Government. Here again, our Law-giver, (no Deist can tell why<sup>a</sup>) forfakes all his own principles; intentionally rejects a support, which was as really beneficial to mankind, in all his interests, as the other notion, of inferior Deities, was but thought to be; intirely omits to mention it in his Institutes of Law and Religion; and is studiously silent in all those particulars which lead to the propagation of it<sup>a</sup>. But of this, more at large, in the sixth volume.

Again,

culoussly to over-rule the Will: because we conceive *divine Revelation* with *human filion* to be a mixture of things utterly incompatible; that their can be no alliance between God and Belial; nor any union between the Spirit of Truth, and the Father of Lies.

<sup>a</sup> See a *view of L. Bolingbroke's Philosophy: Let. IVth.*

<sup>a</sup> " Suppose (says Dr. Stebbing) a Deist should alledge that the Israelites learned this doctrine in Egypt where Moses himself also might have learnt it, *How would you prove the contrary?*" Examination, p. 33—4.

Should a *Deist* alledge *this*, as making any thing *against* my argument, or *for* his own cause, I should say he knew as little either of one or the other as Dr. Stebbing himself does: For my argument being addressed to the Deist, supposes that Moses and the Israelites might have learnt the doctrine in Egypt; and on that supposition, defies them to find a reason, exclusive of the *extraordinary Providence*, why Moses did not make so useful and necessary a doctrine, (in favour of which his People were much prejudiced) the Sanction of his Laws. Their acquaintance with the doctrine in Egypt, I supposed: This acquaintance my argument required me to suppose: and yet this Answerer of my Book knew so little of its contents as to ask, *How I WOULD PROVE THE CONTRARY?* If the learned Doctor had any pertinent drift in this question, you can discover it only by supposing him to go upon this ridiculous assumption, that what the Jews once learned they could never  
either



Again, it was of the CIVIL POLICY of Egypt to prefer an hereditary despotic Monarchy to all other forms of Government: Moses, on the contrary, erects a THEOCRACY on the free choice of the people; to be administered Aristocratically.

Add to all this, that his deviation from the Policy of Egypt was encountering the strongest prejudices of his People; who were violently carried away to all the customs and superstitions of that Policy.

And now let an ingenuous Deist weigh these instances, with many more that will easily occur to him, and then fairly tell us his sentiments. Let him try, if he can think it was at all likely, that Moses, a mere human Lawgiver, a Native of Egypt, and learned in all its political Wisdom, should, in the formation of a Civil policy, for such a People as he undertook to govern, act directly contrary to all the fundamental principles in which he had been instructed?

I. To this perhaps it may be said,—“ That Moses well understood the folly and falshood of inferior Gods:—that he did not believe the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments;—that he was too honest to employ fraud:—that his love to his People made him indisposed to an hereditary despotic Monarchy:—and that the theologic principles of Egypt led him to the invention of a THEOCRACY.” To all this, I answer,

either *unlearn* or forget, and therefore if they had learned the doctrine of a future state in Egypt, they could not be so ignorant of it as, I say, they were. But to clear up his conceptions in this matter he may have recourse, if he pleases, to the latter division of the fifth Sect. of the fifth Book, of the *Div. Leg.*



1. As to *his seeing the falshood of inferior Gods*.—So did many other of the old Lawgivers, instructed in Egyptian policy; yet, being taught to think Polytheism useful to Society, they did not, for all that, the less cultivate their abominable idolatry.

2. As to *his not believing a future state, and his honesty in not teaching what he did not believe*.—Such Objectors forget that they have already made him a fraudulent impostor, in his pretension to a divine employment. Now if the end of civil Government made him fraudulent in that instance, it would hardly suffer him to be scrupulous in this; even allowing the extravagance of this fancy, that he *did not believe* a future state; because, as hath been proved at large<sup>b</sup>, the propagation of this doctrine is, and was always believed to be, the firmest support of civil government: But of this more at large, hereafter.

3. With regard to *his concern for the happiness of his people*;—I will readily allow this to be very consistent with Heroic or Legislative fraud. But this happiness the ancient Lawgivers thought best procured by the Egyptian mode of Government. And indeed they had EXPERIENCE, the best guide in public matters. For the excellent education which the Egyptians gave their Kings, in training them up to the love of the Public, and high veneration for the Laws, prevented the usual abuse of power; and gave to that people the longest and most uninterrupted course of prosperity that any Nation ever enjoyed<sup>c</sup>. It is no wonder therefore, that

<sup>b</sup> See the first volume.

<sup>c</sup> This was the character it bore even so late as the time of Jeremiah, who tells us, that the rebellious Israelites, frightened  
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that this should make MONARCHY, (as it did) the first favourite form of Government, in all places civilized by the aid of Egypt.

4. But, *the theologic principles of Egypt led Moses to the invention of a THEOCRACY.*—Without doubt those principles, as we shall see hereafter, occasioned its easy reception amongst the Hebrews. But there is one circumstance in the case that shews its invention must have been of GOD, and not of Moses. For the ground of its easy reception was the notion of local tutelary Deities. But this notion, Moses, in preaching up the doctrine of the one true GOD, entirely took away. This, indeed, on a supposition of a DIVINE LEGATION, has all the marks of admirable wisdom; but supposing it to be Moses's own contrivance, we see nothing but inconsistency and absurdity. He forms a design, and then defeats it; he gives with one hand, and he takes away with the other.

II. But it may be farther objected,—“That, as it was the intention of Moses to separate these people from all others, he therefore, gave them those cross and opposite institutions, as a barrier to all communication.” To this I answer,

1. That were it indeed GOD, and not Moses, who projected this SEPARATION, the reason would be good. Because the immediate end of GOD's separation was twofold, to keep them unmixed; and to secure them from idolatry: and such end could not be effected but by opposing those funda-

at the power of the king of Babylon, refused to stay any longer in Judea, saying, No, but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell. chap. xlii. 14.

mental principles of Egypt, with the doctrine of ONE GOD, and the institution of a THEOCRACY. But then this, which would be a good reason, will become a very bad objection. Our Deist is to be held to the question. He regards Moses as a mere human Lawgiver. But the sole end which such a one could propose by a *separation*, was to preserve his people pure and unmixed. Now this could be effected only by laws which kept them at home, and discouraged and prevented all foreign commerce: and these, by the same means, bringing on general poverty, there would be small danger of their being much frequented, while they laboured under that contagious malady. This we know was the case of Sparta. It was their Lawgiver's chief aim to keep them distinct and unmixed. But did he do this by institutions which crossed the fundamental principles of the Religion and Policy of Greece? By no means. They were all of them the same. The method he employed was only to frame such Laws as discouraged commerce and foreign intercourse. And these proved effectual. I the rather instance in the Spartan, than in any other Government, because the end, which Moses and Lycurgus pursued in common, (tho' for different purposes) of keeping their people *separate*, occasioned such a likeness in several parts of the two Institutions, as was, in my opinion, the real origin of that tradition mentioned in the first book of Maccabees, That there was a Family-relation between the two People.

2. But, secondly, as it is very true, that the mere intention of keeping a people separate and unmixed, (which is all, a human Lawgiver could have in view) would occasion Laws in opposition to the customs of those people with whom, from  
their



their vicinity to, or fondness for, they were in most danger of being confounded; so, when I insisted on those Anti-egyptian institutions, which I gave as a certain proof of Moses's *Divine Legation*, I did not reckon, in my account, any of that vast number of ritual and municipal laws, which, Manetho confesses, were *given principally in opposition to Egyptian customs*<sup>d</sup>. This a mere separation would require: But this is a very different thing from the opposition to FUNDAMENTALS, here insisted on; which a mere separation did not, in the least, require.

III. But it may be still further urged, "That resentment for ill usage might dispose Moses to obliterate the memory of the place they came from, by a Policy contrary to the *fundamental* Institutions of Egypt." Here again our objecting Deist will forget himself. 1. He hath urged a CONFORMITY in the LAW to Egyptian Rites; and this, in order to discredit Moses's *Divine Legation*: and we have allowed him his fact. Whatever it was therefore that engaged Moses to his general OPPOSITION, it could not be resentment: for that had certainly prevented all kind of conformity or similitude.

2. But, secondly, such effects of civil resentment, the natural manners of men will never suffer us to suppose. We have in ancient history many accounts of the settlement of new Colonies, forced injuriously from home by their fellow-

<sup>d</sup> 'Ο δὲ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτοῖς νόμον ἔθηκε, μήτε προσκυνεῖν θεῷ, μήτε τῶν μάστιγα ἐν Ἀργυπίῳ χρησιμομένον ἱερῶν ζῶων ἀπέχεσθαι μηδὲν, πᾶσι τε θύσαι καὶ ἀγαλῶν συνάπτεσθαι δὲ μηδὲν πλὴν τῶν συννημισμένων. τοιαῦτα δὲ νομοθέτησας καὶ πείσας ἄλλα, μάστιγα τοῖς Ἀργυπίοις ἰδισμοῖς ἐναυλιέμενα. Apud Joseph. cont. Ap. l. i. p. 460, 461. Haverch. Ed.

citizens. But we never find that this imbibtered them against their Country-institutions. On the contrary, their close adherence to their native customs, notwithstanding all personal wrongs, has in every age enabled learned men to find out their original, by strong characteristic marks of relation to the mother city. And the reason is evident: INNATE LOVE OF ONE'S COUNTRY, whose attractive power, contrary to that of natural bodies, is strongest at a distance; and INVETERATE MANNERS which stick closest in distress; (the usual state of all new Colonies) are qualities infinitely too strong to give way to resentment against particular men for personal injuries.

It is not indeed unlikely but that some certain specific Law or custom, which did, or was imagined to contribute to their disgrace and expulsion, might, out of resentment, be reprobated by the new Colony. And this is the utmost that the history of mankind will suffer us to suppose.

On the whole, therefore, I conclude that MOSES'S EGYPTIAN LEARNING IS A STRONG CONFIRMATION OF THE DIVINITY OF HIS MISSION.

The second part of the proposition is no less evident, *That the laws instituted in compliance to the people's prejudices, and in opposition to Egyptian superstitions, support the same truth with equal strength.* Had Moses's Mission been only pretended, his conduct, as a wise Lawgiver, had doubtless been very different. His business had been then only to support a false pretence to inspiration. Let us see how he managed. He pretended to receive the whole frame of a national Institution from God; and to have had the pattern of all its parts brought him



him down from Heaven, to the Mount. But when this came to be promulged, it was seen that, the CEREMONIAL LAW being politically instituted partly in compliance to the people's prejudices, and partly in opposition to Egyptian superstitions, several of its Rites had a reference to the pagan superstitions in vogue. This, as we see, from the objection of the ignorant in these times, might have been an objection in those. And as an Impostor could not but have foreseen the objection, his fears of a discovery would have made him decline so hazardous a system, and cautiously avoid every thing that looked like an imitation. It is true, that, on enquiry, this unfolds a scene of admirable and superior wisdom: but it is such as an Impostor could never have projected; or at least would never have ventured to leave to the mercy of popular judgment. We conclude, therefore, that this conduct is a clear proof that Moses actually received the Institution from God. Nor does this in anywise contradict what we have so much insisted on above, That a mere human Lawgiver, or even an inspired one, acting with free agents, is necessitated to comply with the passions of the People; a compliance which would necessarily induce such a relation to Egypt as we find in the ritual Law: for we must remember too what hath been likewise shewn, that the *ends* of a divine and human lawgiver, both using the common means of a SEPARATION are vastly different; the latter only aiming to keep the people unmixed; the former, to keep them pure from idolatry. Now, in both cases, where the People are dealt with as free agents, some compliance to their prejudices will be necessary. But as, in the Institutions of a human Lawgiver pretending only to inspiration, such  
com-



compliance in the RITUAL would be subject to the danger here spoken of; and as compliance in the FUNDAMENTALS, such as the object of Worship, a future State, and mode of civil Government, would not be so subject; and, at the same time, would win most forcibly on a prejudiced people, to the promoting the Legislator's end; we must needs conclude that these would be the things he would comply with and espouse. On the other hand, as a divine Lawgiver could not comply in these things; and as a RITUAL, like the mosaic, was the only means left of gaining his end, we must conclude that a divine Lawgiver would make his compliances on that side.

1. Let me only add one corollary to our BELIEVING ADVERSARIES, as a farther support of this part of the *proposition*; "That allowing the Ritual-law to be generally instituted in reference to Egyptian and other neighbouring Superstitions, the divine wisdom of the contrivance will be seen in redoubled lustre. One reason, as we have seen above, of the opposition to the notion of *such a reference* is, that the RITUAL LAW WAS TYPICAL, not only of things relating to that Dispensation, but to the Evangelical. This then they take for granted; and, as will be shewn hereafter, with good reason. Now an Institution of a body of Rites, particularly and minutely levelled against, and referring to, the idolatrous practices of those ages; and, at the same time, as minutely typical, not only of all the remarkable transactions under that Dispensation, but likewise of all the great and constituent parts of a future one, to arise in a distant age, and of a genius directly opposite, must needs give an attentive considerer the most amazing idea of divine wisdom.

wisdom\*. And this I beg leave to offer to the consideration of the unprejudiced Reader, as another strong INTERNAL ARGUMENT THAT THE RITUAL LAW WAS NOT OF MERE HUMAN CONTRIVANCE.

2. Let me add another corollary to the UNBELIEVING Jews. We have seen at large how expedient it was for the Jews of the first ages, that the Ritual or ceremonial Law should be directed against the several idolatries of those ages. It was as expedient for the Jews of the later ages that this Law should be TYPICAL likewise. For had it not been *typical*, God would have given a Law whose reason would have ceased many ages before the *Theocracy* was abolished; and so have afforded a plausible occasion to the Jews for changing or abrogating them, on their own head.

3. Let me add a third corollary to the UNBELIEVING GENTILES. The Law's being *typical* obviates their foolish argument against Revelation, that the abolition of the *Mosaic* religion and the

\* Hear what the learned Spencer says on this occasion:  
 "Atque hac in re Deus sapientiæ suæ specimen egregium edidit,  
 et illi non absimile quod in mundo frequenter observemus;  
 in eo enim, notante *Verulamio*, dum *natura aliud agit, providentia aliud elicit*; nam frondibus quas natura, consuetudinem suam retinens, parit, utitur providentia ad cœli injurias a fructu tenello propulsandas. Pari modo, cum Hebræorum natio, consuetudinem suam exuere nescia, ritus antiquos impense desideraret, Deus eorum desiderio se morigerum præbebat; sed eorum ruditate & impotentia puerili ad fines egregios & sapientia sua dignos utebatur. Sic enim ritus antiquos populo indultos, circumstantiis quibusdam demptis aut additis, immutavit, ut rerum cœlestium schema repræsentarent, oculis purgationibus facile percipiendum; adeo ut Deus puerilibus Israelitarum studiis obsequens, divina promoveret."  
*De Leg. Heb. Rit.* p. 218.



establishment of the *Christian* in its stead, impeaches the wisdom of God, as implying change and inconstancy in his acting; for by his making the Law *typical*, the two religions are seen to be the two parts of one and the same design.

The great Maimonides, who first<sup>f</sup> explained the CAUSES of the Jewish Ritual in any reasonable manner

<sup>f</sup> In his *More Nevoch*, Par. III. This famous book (as is the fortune of all which bring new proofs for Revelation in a new way) hath undergone many heavy censures both from Jews and Christians. Those blame him for attempting to assign reasons for the Ceremonial ordinances; These for explaining Scripture on the principles of Aristotle. But both, as usual, expose their own ignorance and prevention. In this work, the excellent author studied the real honour of God, together with the good of those to whom his discourse was addressed. And because its end and design appears to be little understood, and depends on a curious piece of history, neglected by his editors and translators, I shall give the Reader a short account of it. In the first flourishing times of the Saracene Empire, (as we learn from William of Paris in his book *De Legibus*) a great number of Jews, devoting themselves to the study of the Aristotelian philosophy, (then cultivated by the Arabs with a kind of scientific fanaticism) and thereby contracting not only an inquisitive but a disputatious habit, set themselves to examine into the REASONS OF THE JEWISH LAWS; which, being unable to discover, they too hastily concluded them to be useless, absurd, and of human invention; and so apostatized, in great numbers, from the Religion of their fathers.—“Postquam autem Chaldæis sive Baby-  
 “Ioniis & genti Arabum commixti sunt, & miscuerunt se studiis eorum & philosophiæ; & secuti sunt opiniones philosophorum; nescientes legis suæ credulitates & Abrahæ fidem  
 “contra disputationes eorum & rationes defendere: hinc  
 “est quod facti sunt in lege erronei, & in fide ipsius Abrahæ  
 “heretici; maxime postquam regnum SARACENORUM diffusum est super habitationem eorum. Exinde enim æternitatem mundi & alios Aristotelis errores secuti sunt multi  
 “eorum. Hincque pauci veri Judæi (hoc est, qui non in parte  
 “aliquâ credulitatis suæ Saraceni sunt, aut Aristotelicis consentientes erroribus) in terrâ Saracenorum inveniuntur, de his  
 “qui inter philosophos commorantur. Dedit enim occasio-  
 “nem





And what is it, we lose? Nothing sure very great or excellent. The imaginary honour of being original in certain Rites (considered in themselves) indifferent; and becoming good or bad by *comparison*, or by the *authority* which enjoins them, and by the object to which they are directed.

The Deist indeed pretends that, in the things borrowed from Egypt, the first principles of Law and Morality, and the very tritest customs of civil life, are to be included. The extravagance of this fancy hath been exposed elsewhere\*. But as it is a species of folly all parties are apt to give into, it may not be amiss to consider this matter of TRADUCTIVE CUSTOMS a little more particularly.

There is nothing obstructs our discoveries in Antiquity (as far as concerns the noblest end of this study, the knowledge of mankind) so much as that false, though undisputed Principle, that the general customs of men, whether civil or religious, (in which a common likeness connects, as in a chain, the Manners of its inhabitants, throughout the whole globe) are traductive from one another. When, in truth, the origin of this general similitude, is from the sameness of one common Nature, improved by reason, or debased by superstition. But when a custom, whose meaning lies not upon the surface, but requires a profounder search, is the subject of inquiry, it is much easier to tell us that the users borrowed it from such or such a people, than rightly to inform us, what common principle of REASON or SUPERSTITION gave birth to it in both.

\* Vol. I. part 2d. p. 133.

How many able writers have employed their time and learning to prove that Christian Rome borrowed their superstitions from the Pagan city? They have indeed shewn an exact and surprising likeness in a great variety of instances. But the conclusion from thence, that, therefore, the Catholic borrowed from the Heathen, as plausible as it may seem, is, I think, a very great mistake; which the followers of this hypothesis might have understood without the assistance of the principle here laid down: since the rise of the superstitious customs in question were many ages later than the conversion of that imperial city to the Christian Faith: consequently, at the time of their introduction, there were no PAGAN prejudices which required such a compliance from the ruling Clergy. For this, but principally for the general reason here advanced, I am rather induced to believe, that the very same *spirit of superstition*, operating in equal circumstances, made both Papists and Pagans truly originals.

But does this take off from the just reproach which the Reformed have cast upon the Church of Rome, for the practice of such Rites, and encouragement of such Superstitions? Surely not; but rather strongly fixes it. In the former case, the rulers of that Church had been guilty of a base compliance with the infirmities of their new converts: in the latter, the poison of superstition is seen to have infected the very vitals of its Hierarchy<sup>b</sup>.

But

<sup>b</sup> The learned author of the elegant and useful *Letter from Rome* has here taken to himself what was meant in general of the numerous writers on the same subject; and so has done it the honour of a confutation, in a postscript to the last edition  
of



But then, truth will fare almost as ill when a right, as when a wrong principle, is pushed to an extravagance.

of that *Letter*. But the same friendly considerations, which induced him to end the postscript with declaring his unwillingness to enter further into controversy with me, disposed me not to enter into it at all. This, and neither any neglect of him, nor any force I apprehended in his arguments, kept me silent. However, I owe so much both to myself and the public, as to take notice of a misrepresentation of my argument; and a change of the question in dispute between us: without which notice, the controversy (as I agree to leave it where it is) can scarce be fairly estimated.——“A paragraph in Mr. Warburton’s *Divine Legation of Moses* obliges me (says Dr. Middleton) to detain the reader a little longer, in order to obviate the prejudices which the authority of so celebrated a writer may probably inject, to the disadvantage of my argument.—“I am a loss to conceive what could move my learned friend to pass so severe a censure upon an argument which is hitherto been espoused by all protestants; admitted by many papists; and evaded rather than contradicted by any. But whatever was his motive, which, I persuade myself, was no unfriendly one, he will certainly pardon me, if pursuing the full conviction of my mind, I attempt to defend an established principle, confirmed by strong and numerous facts, against an opinion wholly new and strange to me; and which, if it can be supposed to have any force, overthrows the whole credit and use of my present work.—He allows that the writers, who have undertaken to deduce the rites of popery from paganism, have shewn an exact and surprising likeness between them in a great variety of instances. This (says he) one would think, is allowing every thing that the cause demands: it is every thing, I dare say, that those writers desire.\*” That it is every thing those writers desire, I can easily believe, since I see, my learned friend himself hath considered these two assertions, 1. *The religion of the present Romans derived from that of their heathen ancestors*; and, 2. *An exact conformity, or uniformity rather of worship between popery and paganism*, he hath considered them, I say, as convertible propositions: for, undertaking, as his title page informs us, to prove the religion of the present Romans derived from that of their heathen ancestors; and having gone through his arguments, he concludes them in these words, “But it is high

\* Postscript, p. 8.

extravagance. Thus, as it would be ridiculous to deny, that the Roman laws of the Twelve Tables were

"time for me to conclude, being persuaded, if I do not flatter myself too much, that I have sufficiently made good WHAT I FIRST UNDERTOOK TO PROVE, an exact conformity, or uniformity rather, of worship between popery and paganism." But what he undertook to prove, we see was, *The religion of the present Romans derived from their ancestors*: That I have therefore, as my learned friend observes, *allowed every thing those writers desire*, is very likely. But then, whether I have *allowed every thing that the cause demands*, is another question: which I think can never be determined in the affirmative, till it be shewn that no other probable cause can be assigned of this *exact conformity between Papiſts and Pagans*, but a borrowing or derivation from one to the other. And I guess, that now this is never likely to be done, since I myself have actually assigned another probable cause, namely the *same spirit of superstition operating in the like circumstances*,

But this justly celebrated writer goes on—"This question according to his [the author of the D. L.] notion is not to be decided by facts, but by a principle of a different kind, a *superior knowledge of human nature*†." Here I am forced to complain of a want of candour, a want not natural to my learned friend. For, whence is it, I would ask, that he collects, that, according to my notion, this question is not to be decided by facts, but a *superior knowledge of human nature*? From any thing I have said? Or from any thing I have omitted to say? Surely, not from any thing I have said, (tho' he seems so insinuate so much by putting the words, a *superior knowledge of human nature* in Italic characters, as they are called) because I leave him in possession of his *fact*, and give them all the validity he desires; which he himself observes; and, from thence, as we see, endeavours to draw some advantage to his hypothesis:—Nor from any thing I have omitted to say; for, in this short paragraph where I deliver my opinion, and, by reason of its evidence, offer but one single argument in its support, that argument arises from a *fact*, viz. that the *superstitious customs in question were many ages later than the conversion of the imperial city to the Christian faith*: whence I conclude, that the roling Churchmen could have no motive in borrowing from Pa-

\* Letter, p. 224.

† Postscript, p. 228.



were derived from the Greeks ; because we have a circumstantial history of their traduction : so it would

gan customs, either as those customs were then fashionable in themselves, or respectable for the number or quality of their followers. And what makes this the more extraordinary is, that my learned friend himself immediately afterwards quotes these words ; and then tells the reader, that *my argument consists of an HISTORICAL FACT and of a consequence deduced from it.* It appears therefore, that, according to my notion, the question is to be decided by *facts*, and not by a *superior knowledge of human nature.* Yet I must confess I then thought, and do so still, that a *superior knowledge of human nature* would do no harm, as it might enable men to judge better of *facts* than we find they are generally accustomed to do. But will this excuse a candid representer for saying, that *the question, according to my notion, was not to be decided by facts, but a superior knowledge of human nature?* However, to do my learned friend all justice, I must needs say, that, as if these were only words of course, that is, words of controversy, he goes on, through the body of his postscript, to invalidate my argument from *fact*; and we hear no more of a *superior knowledge of human nature* than in this place where it was brought in to be laughed at.

As to the argument, it must even shift for itself. It has done more mischief already than I was aware of : and forced my learned friend to extend his charge from the *modern* to the *ancient church of Rome.* For my argument, from the low birth of the superstitions in question, coming against his hypothesis, after he had once and again declared the purpose of his letter to be the exposing of the heathenish idolatry and superstition of the *PRESENT church of Rome* ; he was obliged, in support of that hypothesis, to shew that even the early ages of the church were not free from the infection. Which hath now quite shifted the subject with the scene, and will make the argument of his piece from henceforth to run thus, *The religion of the present Romans derived from their early Christian ancestors ; and theirs, from the neighbouring Pagans.* To speak freely, my reasoning (which was an argument *ad hominem*, and, as such, I thought, would have been revered) reduced the learned writer to this dilemma ; either to allow the fact, and give up his hypothesis ; or to deny the fact, and change his question. And he has chosen the latter as the lesser evil. As to the fact, that the Churches of the first ages might do that on their own heads,



would be equally foolish not to own, that a great part of the Jewish ritual was composed in reference to the superstitions of Egypt; because their long abode in the country had made the Israelites extravagantly fond of *Egyptian* customs: but to think, (as some Deists seem to have done) that they borrowed from thence their common principles of morality, and the legal provisions for the support of such principles<sup>1</sup>, is, whether we consider the Israelites under a divine or human direction, a thing equally absurd; and such an absurdity as betrays the grossest ignorance of human nature, and the history of mankind.

And thus much concerning the ANTIQUITY of Egypt, and its EFFECTS on the divine legation of Moses.

heads, which Moses did upon authority, i. e. indulge their Pagan converts with such of their customs, as could not be easily abused to superstition, may be safely acknowledged. My learned friend has produced a few instances of such indulgence, which the censure of some of the more scrupulous of those times hath brought to our knowledge. But the great farraginous body of Popish rites and ceremonies, the subject of my learned friend's *Letter from Rome*, had surely a different original. They were brought into the Church when Paganism was in part abhorred and in part forgotten; and when the same spirit of sordid superstition which had overspread the Gentile world, had now deeply infected the Christian.

<sup>1</sup> See Marsham.



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T H E  
DIVINE LEGATION  
O F  
M O S E S  
D E M O N S T R A T E D.

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B O O K V.

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S E C T. I.

**H**AVING now examined the CHARACTER of the Jewish People, and the TALENTS of their Lawgiver, I come next to consider the NATURE of that Policy, which by his ministry was introduced amongst them. For in these two inquiries I hope to lay a strong and lasting foundation for the support of the third general proposition, *That the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is not to be found in, nor did make part of the Mosaic Dispensation.*

We find amongst this people a Policy differing from all the Institutions of mankind; in which the two Societies, civil and religious, were perfectly



incorporated, with GOD ALMIGHTY, AS A TEMPORAL GOVERNOR, at the head of both.

The peculiar administration attending so singular a frame of Government hath always kept it from the knowledge of superficial observers. Christian writers, by considering Judaism as a Religious policy only, or a Church; and Deists, as a Civil policy only, or a State; have run into infinite mistakes concerning the reason, the nature, and the end of its laws and institutions. And, on so partial a view of it, no wonder that neither have done justice to this amazing Œconomy. Let us suppose, the famous picture of the female centaur by Zeuxis, where two different Natures were so admirably incorporated, that the passage from one to the other, as Lucian tells us<sup>k</sup>, became insensible; let us, I say, suppose this picture to have been placed before two competent judges, yet in such different points of view, that the one could see only the *brutal*, the other only the *human* part; would not the first have thought it a beautiful horse, and the second, as beautiful a woman; and would not each have given the creature supposed to be represented such functions as he judged proper to the species in which he ranked it? But would not both of them have been mistaken; and would not a sight of the whole have taught them to rectify their wrong judgments? as well knowing that the functions of such a compounded animal, whenever it existed, must be very different from those of either of the

<sup>k</sup> Τὴν θήλειαν δὲ ἵππου γε τῆς καλλίστης, οἶαι μάλιστα αἱ Θέτταλαι εἰσιν, ἀδμήτις, ἔτι καὶ ἀθάστοι· τὸ δ' αὖν ἡμίτεμον, γυναικὸς, πάγκαλον, — καὶ ἡ μῆξις δὲ, καὶ ἡ ἀρμογὴ τῶν σωμάτων, καθὼς συνάπτεται καὶ συνδέεται τῇ γυναικείῳ τὸ ἵππικόν, ἡρέμα, καὶ ἐκ ἀθρόως μεταβάλλουσα, καὶ ἐκ προσαγωγῆς τρεπομένη, λαμβάνει τὴν ὄψιν ἐκ θαλάσσης, εἰς τὸ ἔτερον ὑπαστομένη. Zeuxis.

other,

other, singly and alone. From such partial judges of the LAW therefore, little assistance is to be expected towards the discovery of its true nature.

Much less are we to expect from the Jewish Doctors: who, though they still keep sheltered, as it were, in the ruins of this august and awful Fabric; yet patch it up with the same barbarity of taste, and impotence of science, that the present Greeks are wont to hide themselves amongst the mouldering monuments of Attic power and politeness. Who, as our travellers inform us, take a beggarly pride in keeping up their claim to these wonders of their Ancestors magnificence, by white-washing the parian marble with chalk, and incrusting the porphyry and granate with tiles and potsherds.

But least of all shall we receive light from the fantastic visions of our english *Cocceians*<sup>1</sup>; who have sublimed the crude nonsense of the Cabalists, so long buried in the dull amusement of picking Mysteries out of letters, into a more spiritual kind of folly; a quintessence well defecated from all the impurities of sense and meaning.

Therefore, to understand the nature of the jewish Œconomy, we must begin with this truth, to which every page of the five books of Moses is ready to bear witness, *That the separation of the Israelites was in order to preserve the doctrine of the UNITY, amidst an idolatrous and polytheistic World.* The necessity of this provision shall be shewn at large hereafter<sup>m</sup>. At present we only desire the Deist would be so civil as to suppose there might possibly be a sufficient cause.

<sup>1</sup> The followers of *Hutchinson*.

<sup>m</sup> In the ninth book.

But now, because it is equally true, that this *separation* was fulfilling the promise made to ABRAHAM their Father; these men have taken occasion to represent it as made for the sake of a FAVOURITE PEOPLE<sup>a</sup>. And then again, supposing such a partial distinction to be inconsistent with the divine attributes, have ventured to arraign the LAW itself of imposture.

But this representation of the fact is both unjust and absurd. They cannot deny but it might be God's purpose, at least, that it became his goodness, to preserve the doctrine of the UNITY amidst an idolatrous world. But this, (we know by the event) could never be effected but by a *separation* of one part from the rest. Nor could such a separation be made any otherwise than by bringing that part under God's peculiar protection: The consequence of which were GREAT TEMPORAL BLESSINGS. Now as some one People must needs be selected for this purpose, it seems most agreeable to our ideas of divine Wisdom, which commonly effects many ends by the same means, to make the  *blessings* attendant on such a *selection*, the reward of some high exalted virtue in the progenitors of the chosen People. But therefore to object that they were chosen as FAVOURITES, is both unjust and absurd. The *separation* was made for the sake of Mankind in general; though one People became the honoured instrument, in reward of their Forefathers' virtues. And this is the language of those very Scriptures which, as they pretend, furnish the objection. Where God, by the Prophet Ezekiel, promises to restore the Israelites, after a short dispersion thro' the Countries, to their own land, he declares this

<sup>a</sup> See the first vol. of the *Div. Leg.* p. 289. 2d edit.



to be the end of their separation: "Therefore  
 " say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the  
 " LORD GOD, I DO NOT THIS FOR YOUR SAKES,  
 " O HOUSE OF ISRAEL, BUT FOR MINE HOLY  
 " NAME'S SAKE, which ye have profaned among  
 " the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanc-  
 " tify my great name which was profaned amongst  
 " the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst  
 " of them; and the heathen shall know that I am  
 " the LORD, saith the LORD GOD, when I shall be  
 " sanctified in you before their eyes." What  
 God himself says of the PEOPLE, St. Paul says of  
 their LAW: "Wherefore then serveth the Law?  
 " IT WAS ADDED BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS;  
 " till the seed should come, to whom the promise  
 " was made <sup>p</sup>." *It was added*, says the Apostle.  
 To what? To the patriarchal Religion of the  
 UNITY<sup>a</sup>. To what end? *Because of transgressions*,  
 i. e. the transgressions of polytheism and idolatry;  
 into which, the rest of mankind were already ab-

<sup>a</sup> EZEK. xxxvi. 22, 23.<sup>p</sup> GAL. iii. 19.

\* Yet some writers against the Divine Legation will have it,  
 that from the very context [ver. 16, 17. *To Abraham and his  
 seed were the promises made, &c. The COVENANT that was con-  
 firmed before of God in Christ, &c.*] it appears that St. Paul  
 means, the Law was ADDED not barely to the Patriarchal Reli-  
 gion, but to the promise of the inheritance, the covenant that was  
 confirmed before of God; and from thence, conclude that the  
 Jewish Religion had the doctrine of a future state. This it is  
 to have a retrospective view, and with a microscopic eye! For had  
 they, when they went one step backward, but gone two, they  
 would have seen, St. Paul could not possibly have had their  
 meaning in view, for at ver. 15. he expressly says,—though it be  
 but a MAN'S COVENANT [much less if it be GOD'S] yet if it be  
 confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. The Law  
 therefore mentioned as ADDED in the 19th verse, cannot be un-  
 derstood, in the Apostle's sense, as being added to the COVENANT  
 that was confirmed before of God in Christ, or indeed to any  
 thing, but to the Patriarchal Religion of the Unity.

forbed,

forbed, and the Jews at that time, hastening apace; and from which, there was no other means of restraining them, than by this ADDITION; an addition that kept them separate from all others, and preserved the doctrine of the UNITY till the *coming of the promised seed.*

But another thing offends the Deists: they cannot understand, let the end of this choice be what it would, why God should prefer so perverse and sottish a People, to all others. One reason hath been given already; that it was for the sake of their Forefathers, and to fulfill the promise made to the Patriarchs. But others are not wanting; and those very agreeable to the ideas we have of infinite Wisdom; such, for instance, as this, That the EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE, by which they were blessed and protected, might become the more visible and illustrious. For had they been endowed with the shining qualities of the more polished nations, the effects of that providence might have been ascribed to their own power or wisdom. Their impotence and inability, when left to themselves, is finely represented in the Prophet Ezekiel, by the similitude of the vine-tree: *Son of man, what is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is amongst the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?—Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As the vine-tree amongst the trees of the forest<sup>r</sup>, &c.* For as the vine, which, with cultivation and support is the most valuable of all trees, becomes the most worthless, when left neglected in its own natural state: so the Jews, who made so superior a figure under

<sup>r</sup> Chap. xv. ver. 3.

the particular protection of God, which, from their sins, that protection was withdrawn, became the weakest and most contemptible of all tributary nations.

The Poet VOLTAIRE indeed has had a different revelation. "The pride of every individual amongst the Jews (says he) is interested in believing, that it was not their DETESTABLE POLICY, their ignorance in the arts, and their unpoliteness, which destroyed them; but that it is God's anger which yet pursues them for their idolatries." This DETESTABLE POLICY (for so, with the free insolence of impiety, characteristic of these times, he calls the MOSAIC INSTITUTION) was a principle of independency: this *ignorance in the arts* prevented the entrance of luxury; and this *unpoliteness* hindered the practice of it. And yet parsimony, frugality, and a spirit of liberty, which naturally preserve other States, all tended, in the ideas of this wonderful Politician, to destroy the Jewish. Egypt was long lost for want of a spirit of independency; Greece sunk by its knowledge in the arts; and Rome was ruined by its politeness: yet Judæa suffered for the want of all these causes of destruction. Is not this more than a thousand topical arguments, to prove, that they were ruined by nothing but by their idolatries, which brought down God's vengeance upon them? But any contrivance will serve a Poet, any argument will satisfy a Freethinker, to keep a God and his providence at a distance. And that the PEOPLE were as DETESTABLE as their POLICY, the same Poet, the virtu-

\* L'orgueil de chaque Juif est intéressé à croire que ce n'est point sa DETESTABLE POLITIQUE, son ignorance des arts, sa grossièreté, qui l'a perdu; mais que c'est la colère de Dieu qui le punit. *Rem. ix. sur les pensées de Pascal.*



ous Voltaire assures us—" We do not find, (says he) throughout the whole annals of the HEBREW PEOPLE one generous action. They are utter strangers both to hospitality, to beneficence, and to clemency. Their sovereign-good is the practice of Usury, with all but their own nation. And this disposition, the principle of all baseness, is so inrooted in their hearts, that Usury is the constant object of the figures they employ in that species of eloquence which is peculiar to them. *Their glory is to lay waste with fire and sword, such paltry villages as they were just able to storm: They cut the throats of the old men and children, and reserve from slaughter only the marriageable virgins. They assassinate their masters when they are slaves. They are incapable of pardoning when they conquer. THEY ARE THE FOES OF ALL MANKIND*"

Such is the strong colouring of our MORAL PAINTER. He has dipt his pencil in sulphur to delineate with horns and tails, these chosen instruments of God's vengeance on a devoted Nation, overrun with UNNATURAL LUST and brutish Idolatry; for to their destruction, the murders, the rapine, and

\* On ne voit dans toutes les Annales du peuple Hebreu aucune action généreuse. Ils ne connaissent ni l'hospitalité, ni la libéralité, ni la clémence. Leur sovereign bonheur est d'exercer l'usure avec les étrangers; et cet esprit de usure, principe de toute lacheté, est tellement enraciné dans leurs coeurs, que c'est l'objet continuel des figures qu'ils employent dans l'espèce d'éloquence qui leur est propre. Leur gloire est de mettre à feu & à sang les petits villages, dont ils peuvent s'emparer. Ils égorgent les vieillards & les enfans; ils ne réservent que les filles nubiles; ils assassinent leurs Maîtres quand ils sont esclaves; ils ne savent jamais pardonner quand ils sont Vainqueurs; ILS SONT LES ENNEMIS DU GENRE HUMAIN. *Addit. a l'Hisp. Generale, p. 30.*

the violations here charged upon the *Hebrew People*, allude. For the rest, it is so much below all criticism, that one is almost ashamed to touch upon it. Otherwise, we might observe, that, in his rage, he hath confounded the character of the ancient HEBREWS with that of the modern JEWS, two people as much unlike as the ancient Franks to modern Frenchmen.—We might be merry with the nonsense, of *Usury's being the object of their figures of eloquence*; which yet is not more ridiculous in the thought than absurd in the expression; his meaning, I suppose, being, that their figures of eloquence are formed from, and allude to, the circumstances attending their practice of *Usury*.

But the affair grows more serious, as we proceed with our *General Historian*; and we shall find that this unhappy People, however they may stand with their *God*, certainly, at present, for some reason or other, lye under the *Poet's curse*. And from his uncommon knowledge of their *Usury* and their *eloquence*, I should suspect, he had lately been transacting some money-matters with them, and had been not only out-witted but out-talked too into the bargain.

As to their HATRED OF ALL MANKIND, (the chopping-block of infidelity) we have it over again, and more at large, in another place. “ You are  
 “ (says he to his reader) struck with that hatred  
 “ and contempt, which all people have always entertained for the Jewish Nation. It is the unavoidable consequence of THEIR LEGISLATION;  
 “ which reduced things to the necessity, that either  
 “ the Jews must enslave the whole world, or that  
 “ they, in their turn, must be crushed and destroyed.  
 “ It WAS COMMANDED THEM to hold all other  
 “ People



“ People in abhorrence, and to think themselves  
 “ polluted if they had eat in the same dish which  
 “ belonged to a man of another Religion. BY THE  
 “ VERY LAW ITSELF, they at length found them-  
 “ selves the natural enemies of THE WHOLE RACE  
 “ OF MANKIND ”.”

I believe it will not be easy to find, even in the dirtiest sink of Freethinking, so much fallhood, absurdity, and malice heaped together in so few words. He says, *There was an inevitable necessity, arising from the very genius of the Law itself, either that this people should enslave the whole world, or that they, in their turn, should be crushed and destroyed.*

It might be thought unreasonable to expect that a Poet should read his Bible: but one might be allowed to suppose that he had heard at least of its general contents. If he ever had, could he, unmasked, and in the face of the sun, have said, “ That the MOSAIC LAW directed or encouraged the Jewish people to attempt extensive conquests?” That very LAW, which not only assigned a peculiar and narrow district for the abode of its followers; but, by a number of Institutions, actually confined them within those limits: Such as the stated division of the land to each Tribe; the prohibition of the use of horse; the distinction of *meats* into clean and unclean; the yearly visit of each individual to Jerusalem, with many others. The Poet,

“ — Vous etes frappés de cette haine & de ce mepris que toutes les nations ont toujours eu pour la Nation Juive. C'est la suite inevitable de LEUR LEGISLATION; il falait ou que ce Peuple subjuguât tout, ou qu' il fut ecrasé. Il lui fut ordonné d' avoir, les nations en horreur, & de se croire souillées s'ils avaient mangé dans un plat qui eût appartenu à un homme d'une autre Loi — ils se trouvèrent PAR LEUR LOI MEME enfin Ennemis naturels du GENRE HUMAIN. *Add. a l' Hist. Generale,* p. 174.



who appears throughout his whole history to be a much better Mussulman than a Christian, was surely, when he said this, in some pious meditation on the ALCORAN; which indeed, by *the inevitable consequence of its Legislation*, must either set the Saracens upon enslaving all mankind, or all mankind on extirpating so pernicious a crew of miscreants.

But *the Jews*, he tells us, *were* COMMANDED to hold all other People in abhorrence. If he had said, to hold their IDOLATRIES in abhorrence, he had said true; but that was saying nothing. To tell the world that *the Jews were commanded to hold the PERSONS of Idolaters in abhorrence*, was done like a Poet.

But when he goes on to say, that *The Jews found, BY THE VERY CONSTITUTION OF THE LAW ITSELF, that they were the NATURAL ENEMIES of all mankind*, this was not like a Poet, being indeed a transgression of the PROBABLE: for by the *constitution of the Law itself*, every Jew that could read, found all mankind to be his BRETHREN. For Moses, to prevent any such estrangement, which some other parts of his Institution, if abused, might occasion, was careful to acquaint the chosen Family with the origin of the human race, and of their descent from one man and woman; and, in order to impress this salutary truth more strongly on their minds, he draws out an exact genealogy from Adam, not only of the direct line which was to inhabit the land of Judea, but of all the collateral branches by which the whole earth was peopled.

So that were our Poet to turn *Lawgiver*, (which he might as well do, as GENERAL HISTORIAN) and

and sit down to contrive a method by which brotherly love and affection might be best established amongst the sons of men, one might defy him, with all his poetical or historical invention, to hit upon any more efficacious than that which Moses has here employed. St. Paul, when he would enlarge the affections of the Athenians (to whom all other nations, as well as the Jews, were become BARBARIANS) to that extent which Christian benevolence requires, employed no other topic than this, that GOD HAD MADE OF ONE BLOOD ALL NATIONS OF MEN: and from thence inferred, that they all stand in the relation of BRETHREN to one another.

But it may be asked, What are we then to think of that ODIUM HUMANI GENERIS, with which the ancient Pagans charged the Jews? I have shewn, in the first volume of this work, that there was not the least shadow from *fact* to support this calumny; and that it was merely an imaginary consequence, which they drew from the others declared hate and abhorrence of the Idols of Paganism, and firm adherence to the sole worship of the *one true God*. But besides this original, the *Principles and Doctrine*, there was another, the *Rites and Ceremonies* of the Mosaic Religion; either of them sufficient alone to perpetuate this wretched calumny amongst ignorant and prejudiced men. That the *Doctrine* was worthy of its original, the enemies of Revelation confess: That the establishment of the *Ceremonies*, as they were necessary to support the *Doctrine*, were of no less importance, I shall now shew our Poet,

To separate one people from all others, in order to preserve the doctrine of the *Unity*, was a just purpose.



No separation could be made but by a ceremonial Law.

No ceremonial Law could be established for this purpose, but what must make the Gentiles be esteemed unclean by the separated People.

The consequence of an estimated *uncleaness*, must be the avoiding it with horror: which, when observed by their enemies, would be maliciously represented to arise from this imaginary *odium humani generis*. What idea then must we needs entertain, I will not say of the Religion, but of the common honesty of a modern Writer, who, without the least knowledge of the Jewish Nation or their Policy, can repeat an old exploded calumny with the assurance of one who had discovered a newly acknowledged truth? But the Pagans were decent when compared to this rude Libertine. They never had the insolence to say, that this pretended *hate of all mankind* was COMMANDED BY THE LAW ITSELF. They had more sense as well as modesty. They revered the great Jewish Lawgiver, whom they saw, by his account of the origin of the human race, had laid the strongest foundation amongst his people of brotherly love to all men. A foundation, which not one of the most celebrated Lawgivers of Antiquity had either the wit to inforce, or the sagacity to discover.

Well, but if the Jews were indeed that DETESTABLE *People* which the Poet Voltaire represents them to be, they were properly fitted however with a *Law*, which, he assures us, was full as DETESTABLE. What pity is it that he did not know just so much of his Bible however, as might serve to give some small countenance at least to his



impieties. We might then have had the *Prophet* to support the *Poet*, where speaking, in the name of God, he says, — *I gave them Statutes that were not good, and Judgments whereby they should not live*\*. But to leave this to his maturer projects; and go on with him, in his pious design of eradicating this devoted People; for he assures us, we see, that unless they be rooted out, their DETESTABLE POLICY will set them upon enslaving all mankind.

He hath shewn the PEOPLE to be *detestable*, and their LAW *detestable*; and well has he provided for the reception of both, a most *detestable* COUNTRY. You may, if you please, suppose all this done in vindication of the good providence of the God of Israel; for a *People* so bad, certainly deserved neither a better *Government* nor *Habitation*. No, he had a nobler end than this, it was to give the lye to the Legate of the God of Israel, who promised to them in his Master's name, *A land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands*. Having gotten Moses at this advantage, by the assistance of Servetus and his followers, (for he always speaks from good authority) he draws this delightful picture of the HOLY LAND. — “All of it which is situated towards the south, consists of DESERTS OF SALT SANDS on the side of the Mediterranean and Egypt; and of HORRID MOUNTAINS all the way to Esiongaber, towards the Red-Sea. These sands, and these rocks, at present possessed by a few straggling Arabian Robbers, were the ancient patrimony of the Jews.”

Now

\* EZEKIEL. See p. 79. & seq.

† Tout ce qui est situé vers le midi consiste en deserts de sables salés du côté, de la Méditerranée & de l'Égypte, et en montagnes

Now admitting this account to be true: 1. In the first place, we may inform our Poet, that, from the face of a country lying desert, there is no safe judgment to be made of the degree of its fertility when well cultivated; especially of such a one as is here described, consisting of rugged mountains and sandy plains, which, without culture, indeed, produce nothing, but which, by human industry in a happy climate, may be made to vie with soils naturally the most prolific. 2. It appears from the vast numbers which this country actually sustained, in the most flourishing times of the Theocracy, that it well answered the character their Lawgiver had bestowed upon it, *of a land flowing with milk and honey*. 3. The Israelites, when they took possession of it, certainly found it to come up to the character which Moses had given them, of a place where they should find *great and goodly Cities which they had not builded, houses full of good things, which they had not filled, wells digged which they had not digged, and vineyards and olive trees which they had not planted*<sup>2</sup>. If, I say, they had not found it so, we should soon have heard of it, from the most turbulent and dissatisfied people upon earth. And it was no wonder they found it in this condition, since they had wrested it from the hands of a very numerous and luxurious People, who had carried arts and arms to some height, when they, in any sense, could be said to have *Cities fenced up to Heaven*. But the Poet has a solution of this difficulty; for to the Israelites, just

montagnes affreuses jusqu'à Esiongaber vers la Mer Rouge. Ces sables & ces rochers, habités aujourd'hui par quelques Arabes Volours, sont l'ancienne patrie des Juifs. *Add. à l'Hist. Générale*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> DEUT. vi—viii.



got out of their forty years captivity in the wilderness, this miserable country must needs appear a paradise, in comparison of the Deserts of Param and Cadish Barnea<sup>a</sup>. Now it is very certain, that no *Desert* thereabout, could be more horrid or forbidding than that of Judea, as the Poet has here drawn the landscape. But does he think they had quite forgot the fertile plains of Egypt all this time? And if they *compared* the promised Inheritance to the Wilderness on the one hand, would they not be as apt to *compare* it to Egypt on the other? And what Judea gained by the first it would lose by the second. But he will say, *that Generation* which came out of Egypt, *fell in the Wilderness*. What if they did? they left their fondness for its flesh pots behind them, as we are sufficiently informed from the excessive attachment of their posterity for Egyptian luxury of every kind. 4. But let us admit his account of the sterility of the promised Land, and then see how the pretensions of the Mosaic Mission will stand. We will consider this sterility in either view, as *corrigible*, or as *incorrigible*.

If *corrigible*, we cannot conceive a properer region for answering the ENDS of Providence, as Moses has delivered them unto us, with regard to this People. The first great blessing bestowed on mankind, was to be particularly exemplified in the posterity of Abraham, which was to be *like the sand on the sea-shore for multitude*: and yet they were to be confined within the narrow limits of a single district: so that some proportionate provision was to be made for its numerous Inhabitants.

<sup>a</sup> —Ce pais fut pour eux une terre délicieuse en comparaison des Déserts de Param & de Cades-Barné. *ib.*



Affluence by commerce they could not have; for the purpose of their separation required, that Idolaters should no more be permitted to come and pollute them, than that they should go amongst Idolaters to be polluted by them: And accordingly, a sufficient care was taken, in the framing of their Laws, to hinder this communication at either end. Thus the advantages from commerce being quite cut off, they had only agriculture to have recourse to, for subsistence of their multitudes. And the natural sterility of the land would force them upon every invention to improve it. And artificial culture produces an abundance, which unassisted nature can never give to the most fruitful soil and most benignant climate. Add to this, that a People thus sequestered, would, without such constant attention to the art, and application to the labour, which the meliorating of a backward soil requires, soon degenerate into barbarous and savage manners; the first product of which has been always seen to be a total oblivion of a God.

But if we are to suppose what the Poet would seem to insinuate, in discredit of the Dispensation, that the soil of Judea was absolutely *incorrigible*; a more convincing proof cannot be given of that EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE which Moses promised to them. So that if the *corrigibility* of a bad soil perfectly agreed with the END of the Dispensation, which was a separation, the *incorrigibility* of it was as well fitted to the MEAN, which was an *extraordinary Providence*. For the fact, that Judea did support those vast multitudes being unquestionable, and the natural incapacity of the country so to do, being allowed, nothing remains but that we must recur to that *extraordinary Providence*

dence which not only was promised, but was the natural consequence of a *Theocratic* form of government. But I am inclined to keep between the two contrary suppositions, and take up the premisses of the one, and the conclusion of the other: to hold that the sterility of Judea was very corrigible; but that all possible culture would be inadequate to the vast numbers which it sustained, and that therefore its natural produce was still further multiplied by an *extraordinary blessing* upon the land.

To support this system, we may observe, that this extraordinary assistance was bestowed more eminently, because more wanted, while the Israelites remained in the *Wilderness*. MOSES, whose word will yet go as far as our *General Historian's*, says, that when God took Jacob up, to give him his LAW, he *found him indeed in a desert Land, and in the waste howling Wilderness*; but it was no longer such, when now God had the leading of him. “*He led him about,*” [i. e. while he was preparing him for the conquest of the promised Land] “*He instructed him,*” [i. e. by the LAW, which he there gave him] “*He kept him as the apple of his eye,*” [i. e. he preserved him there by his extraordinary Providence;] the effects of which he describes in the next words,—“*He made him ride on the high places of the earth,*” [i. e. he made the Wilderness to equal, in its produce, the best cultivated places] “*that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty Rock: Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan*” [i. e. as large as that breed] “*and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat,*” [i. e. the flour of wheat] “*and*



“and thou didst drink the pure blood of the  
“Grape.”

That this was no fairy-scene appears from the effects.—“Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou  
“art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art  
“covered with fatness; then he forsook God  
“which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock  
“of his salvation<sup>b</sup>, &c.” This severe reproof  
of Moses certainly did not put the Israelites in  
an humour, to take the wonders in the foregoing  
account on his word, had the facts he appeals to  
been the least equivocal.

On the whole, we can form no conception how  
God could have chosen a People and assigned them  
a land to inhabit, more proper for the display of  
his almighty Power, than the People of Israel  
and the land of Judea. As to the People, the  
PROPHET in his *Parable* of the Vine-tree, informs  
us, that they were naturally, the weakest and most  
contemptible of all nations: and as to the land, the  
POET, in his *great Fable*, which he calls a General  
History, assures us, that Judea was the vilest  
and most barren of all countries. Yet somehow  
or other this *chosen People* became the Instructors  
of mankind, in the noblest office of humanity,  
the science of true Theology: and the *promised  
Land*, while made subservient to the worship of one  
God, was changed, from its native sterility, to a  
region *flowing with milk and honey*; and, by reason  
of the incredible numbers which it sustained, de-  
servedly entitled the GLORY OF ALL LANDS.

This is the state of things which SCRIPTURE  
lays before us. And I have never yet seen those

<sup>b</sup> DEUT. chap. xxxii. ver. 10. & seq.



*strong reasons*, from the schools of Infidelity, that should induce a man, bred up in any school at all, to prefer their logic to the plain facts of the Sacred Historians.

I have used their testimony to expose one, who, indeed, renounces their authority: but in this I am not conscious of having transgressed any rule of fair reasoning. The *Freethinker* laments that there is no contemporary Historian remaining, to confront with the Jewish Lawgiver, and detect his impostures. However, he takes heart, and boldly engages his credit to confute him from his own history. This is a fair attempt. But he prevaricates on the very first onset. The Sacred History, besides the many *civil* facts which it contains, has many of a *miraculous* nature. Of these, our Freethinker will allow the first only to be brought in evidence. And then bravely attacks his adversary, who has now one hand tied behind him: for the civil and the miraculous facts, in the Jewish Dispensation, have the same, nay, a nearer relation to each other, than the two hands of the same body; for these may be used singly and independently, tho' to disadvantage; whereas the civil and the miraculous facts can neither be understood or accounted for, but on the individual inspection of both. This is confessed by one who, as clear-sighted as he was, certainly did not see the consequence of what he so liberally acknowledged. "The miracles in the Bible (says his philosophic lordship) "are not like those in Livy, detached pieces, that do not disturb the civil History, "which goes on very well without them. But

<sup>c</sup> See the View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy, p. 192. & seq. of the third edition.

“ the miracles of the Jewish Historian are intimately connected with all the civil affairs, and make a necessary and inseparable part. The whole history is founded in them; it consists of little else, and if it were not an history of them, it would be a history of nothing.”

From all this, I assume that where an Unbeliever, a Philosopher if you will, (for the Poet Voltaire makes them convertible terms) pretends to shew the falshood of Moses's mission from Moses's own history of it; he who undertakes to confute his reasoning, argues fairly when he confutes it upon facts recorded in that history, whether they be of the miraculous or of the civil kind: since the two sorts are so inseparably connected, that they must always be taken together, to make the history understood, or the facts which it contains intelligible.

## S E C T. II.

ALLOWING it then, to have been God's purpose to perpetuate the knowledge of himself amidst an idolatrous World, by the means of a separated People; let us see how this design was brought about, when the Family, he had chosen, was now become numerous enough to support itself under a *separation*; and Idolatry, which was grown to its most gigantic stature<sup>e</sup>, was now to be repressed.

The

<sup>a</sup> Bolingb. posth. works, vol. III. p. 279.

<sup>e</sup> — Il [Ninus fils de Belus] ne peut être inventeur de l'idolatrie qui étoit bien plus ancienne; je ne dis pas seulement en Egypte, mais même au delà de l'Euphrate, puisque Rachel déroba les Teraphims, &c. — Il faut aller en Egypte pour trouver  
sur



The Israelites, were, at this time, groaning under the yoke of Egypt; whither the all-wise providence

sur cela quelque chose du mieux fondé. Grotius croit que, du temps de Joseph, l'idolatrie n'étoit point encore commune en Egypte. Cependant on voit des-lors dans ce pays un extrême attachement à la magie, à la divination, aux augures, à l'interprétation des songes, &c. — Moÿse defend d'adorer aucune figure, ni de ce qui est visible dans les cieus, ni de ce qui est sur la terre, ni de ce qui est dans les eaux. Voilà la defense generale d'adorer les astres, les animaux, & les poissons. Le veau d'or étoit une imitation du dieu Apis. La niche de Moloch, dont parle Amos, étoit apparemment portée avec une figure du soleil. Moÿse defend aux Hebreux d'immoler aux boucs, comme ils ont fait autrefois. La mort en l'honneur duquel il defend de faire le deuil, étoit le même qu'Osiris. Beelphegor, aux mysteres duquel ils furent entrainez par les femmes de Madian, étoit Adonis. Moloch cruelle divinité, à laquelle on immoloit des victimes humaines, étoit commune du tems de Moÿse, aussi-bien que ces abominables sacrifices. Les Chana-neens adoroient des mouches & d'autres insectes, au rapport de l'auteur de la sagesse. Le même auteur nous parle des Egyptiens d'alors comme d'un peuple plongé dans toutes sortes d'abominations, & qui adoroit toutes sortes d'animaux, même les plus dangereux, & les plus nuisibles. Le pays de Chanaan étoit encore plus corrompu. Moÿse ordonne d'y abattre les autels, les bois sacrez, les idoles, les monumens superstitieux. Il parle des enclos, où l'on entretenoit un feu éternel en l'honneur du soleil. Voilà la plus indubitable époque qui nous ayons de l'idolatrie. Mais ce n'est point une époque qui nous en montre la source & le commencement, ni même le progrès & l'avancement: elle nous présente une idolatrie achevée, & portée à son comble; les astres, les hommes, les animaux mêmes adorez comme autant de divinités; la magie, la divination, l'impieeté au plus haut point où elles puissent aller; enfin le crime, & les desordres honteux, suites ordinaires du culte superstitieux & de regle. *Calmet Dissert. sur l'Origine de l'Idolatrie*, tom. 1. p. 431, 432. Thus far this learned writer. And without doubt, his account of the early and over-bearing progress of idolatry is exact. Another writer who would pass for such, is in different sentiments. He thinks its rise and progress much lower. *If we look* (says he) *amongst the Canaanites, we shall find no reason to imagine that there was a religion different from that of Abraham. Abraham travelled up and down many years in this country, and was respected by the inhabitants of it, as*  
a person



dence of God had conducted them, while they where yet few in number, and in danger of mixing and confounding themselves with the rest of the Nations. In this distress, one of their own Brethren is sent to them with a message from God, by the name and character of the GOD OF THEIR FATHERS, whose virtues God had promised to reward with distinguished blessings on their Posterity. The message, accompanied with *signs and wonders*, denounced their speedy deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and their certain possession of the land of Canaan, the scene of all the promised blessings. The People hearken, and are delivered. They depart from Egypt; and in the third month

a person in great favour with God, &c. And again, Abraham was entertained by Pharaoh without the appearance of any indisposition towards him, or any the least sign of their having a different religion from that which Abraham himself professed and practised. [Connect. of Sac. and Prof. Hist. vol. i. p. 309 and 312.] But here the learned author was deceived by mere modern ideas. He did not reflect on that general principle of intercommunity, so essential to paganism, which made all its followers disposed to receive the God of Abraham as a true, tho' tutelary, Deity. Josephus (the genius of whose times could not but give him a right notion of this matter) saw well the consistency between the veneration paid to Abraham's God, and the idolatry of the venerated; as appears from his making that Patriarch the first who propagated the belief of one God, after the whole race of mankind was sunk into idolatry; and at the same time making all those with whom he had to do, pay reverence to his God. Of Abraham he thus speaks, Διὰ τὰτο καὶ φρονεῖν ἐπ' ἀρετῇ μείζω τῶν ἄλλων ἡρμηνεύσας, καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ δοξάν, ἣν ἅπασιν συνέβαινε εἶναι, καὶνοῦσαι καὶ μεταβάλλειν ἔβου. Πρῶτος ἦν τοιούτῳ θεὸν ἀποφηνέσθαι δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων ἵνα. l. i. c. 7. He makes the idolatrous priests of Egypt tell Pharaoh at once, that the pestilence was sent from God in punishment for his intended violation of the stranger's wife: κατὰ μῆνιν θεοῦ τὸ δυνάμεν αὐτῷ παρεῖναι ἀποσπῆμασιν αἱ ἱερεῖς, ἵφ' οἷς ἰδέσθαι ἐνδοξίαν τοῦ ξένου τὴν γυναῖκα. c. 8. And Abimelech, in the same circumstances, as ready to own the same author of his punishment. Φράζει πρὸς τὰς φίλους, ὡς ὁ θεὸς αὐτῷ ταῦτα ἐπαγάγοι τὴν νόσον ὑπὲρ ἐποικίας τοῦ ξένου φυλάσσωσιν αὐτόντοι αὐτῇ τὴν γυναῖκα. c. 12. *Aniq.*

from

from their departure, come to mount Sinai. Here God first tells them by their Leader, MOSES, that, *if they would obey his voice indeed, and keep his Covenant, then they should be a PECULIAR TREASURE to him above all people, for that the WHOLE EARTH was his*<sup>f</sup>. Where we see an example of what hath been observed above, that whenever an Institution was given to this People, in compliance with the notions they had imbibed in Egypt, a corrective was always joined with it to prevent the abuse. Thus God having here told them, that if they would *obey his voice* they should be *his peculiar treasure above all people*, (speaking in the character of a *tutelary God*;) to prevent this compliance from falling into abuse, as the division of the several regions of the earth to several celestial rulers was inseparably connected with the idea of a *tutelary Deity*, he adds, as a reason for making this People his Peculiar, a circumstance destructive of that pagan notion of tutelary Gods — *for that the WHOLE EARTH was his*. Well. The people consent<sup>g</sup>; and God delivers the Covenant to them, in the words of the two Tables<sup>h</sup>.

But this promise, of their being received for God's *peculiar treasure*, could be visibly performed no otherwise than by their separation from the rest of mankind. As on the other hand, their separation could not have been effected without this visible protection. And this, Moses observes in his intercession for the people: *For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that THOU GOEST WITH US? So shall we be SEPARATED, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth*<sup>i</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> EXOD. xix. 5.<sup>g</sup> Ver. 8.<sup>h</sup> Chap. xx.<sup>i</sup> EXOD. xxxiii. 16.



The better, therefore to secure this separation, God proposes to them, to become their KING. And, for reasons that will be explained anon, condescends to receive the Magistracy, on their free choice. — *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests<sup>k</sup>, and an holy nation.* — *And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do<sup>l</sup>.* God then delivers them a Digest of their civil and religious Laws, and settles the whole Constitution both of Church and State. Thus the Almighty becoming their KING, in as real a sense as he was their God, the republic of the Israelites was properly a THEOCRACY; in which the two Societies, civil and religious, were of course intirely incorporated. A thing neither attended to nor understood. The name indeed is of familiar use: but how little men mean by it, is seen from hence, that those who, out of form, are accustomed to call it a *Theocracy*, yet, in their reasonings about it, consider it as a mere Aristocracy under the Judges; and as a mere Monarchy under the kings: whereas, in truth, it was neither one nor the other, but a real and proper THEOCRACY, under both.

Thus was this famous SEPARATION made. But it will be asked, Why in so extraordinary a way? A way, in which the sagacious Deist can discover nothing but the marks of the Legislator's fraud, and the People's superstition. — As to what a mere human Lawgiver could gain by such a project, will be seen hereafter. At present, it will be sufficient,

<sup>k</sup> For where God is King, every subject is, in some sense or other, a priest: because in that case, civil obedience must have in it the nature of religious ministrations.

<sup>l</sup> Exod. xix. 6—8.



for the removal of these suspicions, to shew, that a THEOCRACY WAS NECESSARY, as the *separation* could not be effected any other way.

It appears, from what hath been shewn above, that the Israelites had ever a violent propensity to mix with the neighbouring Nations, and to devote themselves to the practices of idolatry: this would naturally, and did, in fact, absorb large portions of them. And the sole human means which preserved the remainder, was the severity of their civil Laws against idolatry<sup>m</sup>. Such Laws therefore were necessary to support a *separation*. But penal Laws, enforced by the ordinary Magistrate, for matters of opinion, are manifestly unjust. Some way therefore was to be contrived to render these Laws equitable. For we are not to suppose God would ordain any thing that should violate the rule of natural justice. Now these penal laws are equitable only in a Theocracy: therefore was a THEOCRACY NECESSARY.

That the punishment of opinions, by civil Laws, under a THEOCRACY, is agreeable to the rules of natural justice, I shall now endeavour to prove.

<sup>m</sup> " If there be found amongst you, within any of thy gates  
 " which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman that  
 " hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God  
 " in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other  
 " Gods, and worshiped them, either the sun, or the moon,  
 " or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;  
 " and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired  
 " diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that  
 " such abomination is wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring  
 " forth that man or that woman (which have committed that  
 " wicked thing) unto thy gates, even that man or that woman,  
 " and shalt stone them with stones till they die." DEUT. xvii.

2, 3, 4, 5.

Unbelievers

Unbelievers and intolerant Christians have both tried to make their advantage of this part of the Mosaic institution. The one using it as an argument against the divinity of the Jewish Religion, on presumption that such Laws are contrary to natural equity; and the other bringing it to defend their intolerant principles by the example of Heaven itself. But they are both equally deceived by their ignorance of the nature of a *Theocracy*: which, rightly understood, clears the Jewish Law from an embarrassing objection, and leaves the rights of mankind inviolate.

Mr. Bayle, in an excellent treatise for Toleration, when he comes to examine the arguments of the Intolerants, takes notice of that which they bring from the example in question. "The fourth objection (says he) may arise from hence, that the Law of Moses gives no toleration to idolaters, and false prophets, whom it punishes with death; and from what the Prophet Elijah did to the Priests of Baal, whom he ordered to be destroyed without mercy. From whence it follows, that all the reasons I have employed, in the first part of this *commentary*, prove nothing, because they prove too much; namely, that the literal sense of the Law of Moses, as far as relates to the punishment of opinions, would be impious and abominable. Therefore, since God could, without violating the eternal order of things, command the Jews to put false prophets to death, it follows, evidently, that he could, under the Gospel also, command orthodox believers to inflict the same punishment upon heretics.



“ I am not, if I rightly know myself, of that  
 “ temper of mind, so thoroughly corrupted by the  
 “ contagion of Controversy, as to treat this objec-  
 “ tion with an air of haughtiness and contempt;  
 “ as is the way when men find themselves inca-  
 “ pable of answering to the purpose. I ingenu-  
 “ ously own the objection to be strong; and that  
 “ it seems to be a mark of God’s sovereign plea-  
 “ sure, that we should not arrive at certainty in  
 “ any thing, seeing he hath given exceptions in  
 “ his holy word to almost all the common notices  
 “ of reason. Nay I know some who have no  
 “ greater difficulties to hinder their believing,  
 “ that God was the author of the Laws of Moses,  
 “ and of all those Revelations that occasioned so  
 “ much slaughter and devastation, than this very  
 “ matter of intolerance, so contrary to our clearest  
 “ ideas of natural equity.”

Whether Mr. Bayle himself, was one of these backward believers, as by some of his expressions he gives us reason to suspect, is not material. That he dwelt with pleasure on this circumstance, as favouring his beloved scepticism, is too evident. But sure he went a little too far when he said, *God’s word contains exceptions to almost all the common notices of reason*<sup>o</sup>. I hope to shew, before I have done with Infidelity, that it contains exceptions to none. But the solution of this difficulty was above his strength, had he been ever so willing to reconcile Scripture to Reason. Judea was a

<sup>n</sup> Voions presentement cette iv. objection. On la peut tirer de ce que la loi du Moïse, &c. *Commentaire Philosophique*, Part ii. Chap. 4.

<sup>o</sup>—par les exceptions qu’il a mises dans sa parole à presque toutes les notions communes de la raison.



*terra incognita* to this great Adventurer. Our excellent countryman Mr. LOCKE, who wrote about this time on the same subject, and with that force and precision which is the character of all his writings, was much happier in his account of this matter. *As to the case (says he) of the Israelites in the Jewish Commonwealth, who being initiated into the Mosaical rites, and made citizens of the commonwealth, did afterwards apostatize from the worship of the God of Israel; these were proceeded against as traitors and rebels, guilty of no less than high treason. For the commonwealth of the Jews, different, in that, from all others, was an absolute THEOCRACY; nor was there, nor could there be, any difference between the Commonwealth and the Church. The Laws established there concerning the worship of the one invisible Deity were the civil Laws of that people, and a part of their political Government, in which God himself was the Legislator*<sup>r</sup>. This he said; and, for ought I can learn, he was the first who said it. But this being all he said,

I shall endeavour to support his solution by such other reasoning as occurs to me. It will be necessary then to observe, that God, in his infinite wisdom, was pleased to stand in two *arbitrary* relations towards the Jewish People, besides that *natural* one, in which he stood towards them and the rest of mankind in common. The first was that of a *tutelary Deity, gentilitia* and *local*; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who was to bring their posterity into the land of Canaan, and to protect them there, as his peculiar People. The second was that of *supreme Magistrate and Lawgiver*.

<sup>r</sup> *Letter concerning Toleration, p. 51, 52.*

And in both these relations he was pleased to refer it to the people's free choice, whether or no they would receive him for their GOD and KING. For a tutelary Deity was supposed by the Ancients to be as much matter of election as a civil Magistrate. The People, therefore, thus solemnly accepting him, these necessary consequences followed from the HOREB CONTRACT.

I. First, that as the national GOD and civil Magistrate of the Jews centered in one and the same object, their civil Policy and Religion must be intimately united and incorporated<sup>2</sup>; consequently, their religion had, and very reasonably, A PUBLIC PART, whose subject was the Society as such: tho' this part, in the national pagan Religions, which had it likewise, was extremely absurd, as hath been shewn more at large in the first volume<sup>3</sup>.

II. Secondly, as the two Societies were thoroughly incorporated, they could not be distinguished; but must stand or fall together. Consequently the direction of all their civil Laws must be for the equal preservation of both. Therefore, as the renouncing him for KING, was the throwing him off as GOD; and as the renouncing him for GOD, was the throwing him off as KING; idolatry, which was the rejecting him as GOD, was properly the crimen læsæ majestatis; and so justly punishable by the civil Laws. But there was this manifest

<sup>2</sup> Such a kind of union and incorporation was most absurdly affected by MAHOMET in imitation of the *Jewish Economy*; whence, as might be expected, it appears that neither he nor his assistants understood any thing of its true nature.

<sup>3</sup> P. 99. part 1. ed. 4.



difference in these two cases, as to the effects. The renouncing GOD as civil Magistrate might be remedied without a total dissolution of the Constitution; not so, the renouncing him as tutelary GOD: because, though he might, and did \* appoint a deputy, in his office of KING, amongst the Jewish Tribes; yet he would have no substitute, as GOD, amongst the pagan Deities. Therefore, in necessity as well as of right, idolatry was punishable by the civil Laws of a THEOCRACY; it being the greatest crime that could be committed against the State, as tending, by unavoidable consequence, to dissolve the Constitution. For the one GOD being the supreme Magistrate, it subsisted in the worship of that GOD alone. Idolatry, therefore, as the renunciation of one GOD alone, was in a strict philosophic, as well as legal sense, the crime of lese-majesty. Let us observe farther, that as, by such INCORPORATION, religious matters came under civil consideration, so likewise civil matters came under the religious. This is what Josephus would say, where, in his second book against Apion, speaking of the Jewish Theocracy, he tells us that Moses did not make *Religion a part of Virtue, but Virtue a part of Religion*<sup>†</sup>. The meaning is, that, as in all human Societies, obedience to the Law is moral Virtue; under a THEOCRACY, it is Religion.

III. The punishment of Idolatry, by Law, had this farther circumstance of equity, that it was pu-

\* The kings of *Israel* and *Judah* being, as we shall shew, indeed no other.

† Αἴτιον δ' ὅτι καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ τῆς νομοθεσίας πρὸς τὸ χρῆσιμον πάντων αἰὲν πολλὴν διήκουν· ὃ γὰρ μῆρες τῆν ἀρετῆς ἐποίησε τῆν εὐσεβείαν, ἀλλὰ ταύτης τὰ μέρη τάλῃα συνῆκε καὶ καλέσθαι· λέγω δὲ τὴν δικαιοσύνην, τὴν καλῆν, τὴν συμφερόμενην, τὴν τῷ πολιτῷ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἰσότητας συμφωνίαν. p. 483. Hav. Ed.



nishing the rebellion of those who had chosen the Government under which they lived, when freely proposed to them. Hence, in the Law against idolatry, the crime is, with great propriety, called the TRANSGRESSION OF THE COVENANT <sup>u</sup>.

Thus we see, the Law in question stands clear of the cavils of Infidels, and the abuse of Intolerants <sup>x</sup>.

But

<sup>u</sup> DEUT. xvii. 2.

<sup>x</sup> These considerations will lead us to a right apprehension of that part of the history of Jesus, where James and John, on the inhospitable behaviour of a village of Samaria, say to their Master, in the Legal spirit of the Jewish Œconomy, *Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* [LUKE ix. 54, 55, 56.] i. e. You consider not that you are no longer under the Dispensation of Works (in which a severity of this kind was just and necessary) but, of Grace, in which all restraint and punishment of opinions would be mischievous and unlawful. Here we see the very disposition to intolerance in James and John, is severely censured. Yet the same temper in Paul, even when proceeding into act, is passed over without reproof, when Jesus, after his resurrection, is pleased to reveal his truth to him in a miraculous manner. Our Lord, instead of condemning the nature of the practice, only assures him of the vanity of its effects, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* [ACTS ix. 5.] The reason of this different treatment is evident. James and John had given their names to the Religion of Jesus, in which all force was unjust. Paul was yet of the Religion of Moses, where restraint was lawful. On this account it is that this Apostle, when speaking of his merits as a Jew, expresses himself in this manner, *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past; how that beyond measure I PERSECUTED the church of God, and wasted it; and PROFITED in the Jew religion above many my equals in mine own nation.* [GAL. i. 13.] Here he makes the persecution and the profiting to go hand in hand. And again, *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touch-*  
ing

But to this, the defender of *the common rights of subjects* may be apt to object, "that these penal laws were unjust, because no contract to give up the rights of conscience, can be binding."

To which I reply, with a plain and decisive fact, That none of all the idolatrous worship the Jews ever fell into, from the time of giving the Law to the total dissolution of the Republic, was MATTER OF CONSCIENCE; but always of convenience; such as procuring some temporal good, which they wantonly affected, or averting some temporal evil, which they servilely feared. The truth of which appears from hence, that, in the midst of all their idolatries, the GOD of their Fathers, as we shall see, was ever owned to be the Creator and first Cause of all things; and the Religion taught by Moses, to be a Revelation from heaven,

But it may be asked, What if their commission of idolatry had, at any time, proved matter of con-

*ing the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, PERSECUTING THE CHURCH; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ [PHIL. iii. 4.]* Here he glories in the action, as plainly meritorious. And so indeed it was in a Jew, as appears from the commendations given to it in the case of Phineas, and others. Yet where he speaks of it, under his present character of a Christian, he condemns it as horrid and detestable; and this, in order to shew his followers how it ought to be regarded in the Religion of Jesus. To the Corinthians he says, *I am the least of the Apostles; that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I PERSECUTED the church of God, [1 EP. xv. 9.]* And to Timothy, *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer and a PERSECUTOR, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it in IGNORANCE and UNBELIEF. [1 EP. i. 12.]* i. e. being a Jew.



science; i. e. such an action as they thought they were obliged in duty to perform?

I reply, the question would have weight, had the Law in dispute been of human institution. But as it was given by God, who knows the future equally with the past and present, and saw the case would not happen, it is altogether impertinent. The Question, indeed, points out to us the danger and absurdity in any human legislature to make penal Laws for restraining the exercise of Religion, on any pretence whatsoever.

Thus it is seen, that a *separation*, so necessary to preserve the Unity, could not have been supported without PENAL LAWS against idolatry; and, at the same time, seen that such penal laws can never be equitably instituted but under a Theocracy. The consequence is, that A THEOCRACY WAS NECESSARY.

But this form of Government was highly convenient likewise. The Israelites, on their leaving Egypt, were sunk into the lowest practices of idolatry. To recover them, therefore, by the discipline of a *separation*, it was necessary that the idea of God and his attributes should be impressed upon them in the most *sensible* manner. But this could not be done, commodiously, under his character of God of the Universe: under his character of KING of Israel it well might. Hence it is, we find him in the Old Testament so frequently represented with affections analogous to human passions. The Civil relation, in which he stood to these people, made such a representation natural; the grossness of their conceptions made the representation necessary; and the guarded manner in which it was always qualified,



qualified, prevented it from being mischievous. Hence, another instance of the wisdom of this Œconomy; and of the folly of Spinoza, and others, who would conclude from it, that Moses and the Prophets had themselves gross conceptions of the Deity. Nor should the indiscretion of those Divines pass uncensured, who have taught that God, in the Old Testament, looks on man with a less gracious and benign aspect, than in the New. An error, which at one time gave birth to the most absurd and monstrous of the ancient heresies; and hath at all times furnished a handle to infidelity<sup>y</sup>. But God, whenever he represents himself under the idea of Lord of the Universe, makes one uniform revelation of his nature, throughout all his Dispensations, *as gracious and full of compassion; as good to ALL, and whose tender mercies are OVER ALL HIS WORKS*: yet condescending to become the tutelary God, and civil Magistrate of the Jews, it cannot but be, that he should be considered as having his peculiar inspection attached to this People, and as punishing their transgressions with severity.

These appear to me the true reasons of the Theocratic form of government. With such admirable wisdom was the Jewish Œconomy adapted, to effect the ends it had in view! Yet, notwithstanding the splendour of divinity which shines through every part of this Theocratic form, Mr. Foster, a dissenting preacher, tells us roundly, that it is all an idle dream; and that he will undertake

<sup>y</sup> *It must be owned (says Tyndal) that the same spirit (I dare not call it a spirit of cruelty) does not alike prevail throughout the Old Testament: the nearer we come to the times of the Gospel, the milder it appeared. Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 241. See too Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works throughout.*

to defend the Law, which punishes idolatry with death, “not on *dark and imaginary*, but on *clear and solid* principles; I therefore add, (says he) “supposing the THEOCRATIC form of government “amongst the Jews to be a point incontestable, it “*seems scarce* capable of affording a *full and satisfactory* answer to the objection raised against “the hebrew Law for devoting idolaters to death. “For when the people of Israel, fond of novelty, “and of imitating the customs of other nations, “were stubbornly and inflexibly resolved, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of the Prophet Samuel to the contrary, to have a visible “and mortal King; God upon this occasion declared, that they had *rejected him that he should not reign over them*: and as his former political reign is founded on a supposed compact “between the Almighty Sovereign and his people, that *original compact* being now solemnly “renounced on the part of the people, there must “of course be a dissolution or end of the Theocracy.”

He begins with calling the Theocracy a *dark principle*. And yet, the account he gives of it shews, that he did not find it *dark*; and, what was worse, could not, with all his endeavours, make it so. He calls it *imaginary*; and yet the very History he quotes to prove its short duration, shews, even by his own proof, it was *not imaginary*, but real.

Indeed, if that civil Government, which is founded on ORIGINAL COMPACT, were dissolvable at pleasure, that is, as soon as one of the contracting

<sup>2</sup> Serm. vol. iii. p. 373—374.



parties was grown weary of it, (which this Decider on Government and Laws expressly says it is) then Government, on its most legitimate foundation, would be the most *dark and imaginary* of all things. When the Parliament rose up in arms against Charles I. they wanted just such a Preacher as this, (and yet they had many precious ones) to assure them, that *their renouncing* the King's Authority had fairly dissolved the Monarchy, and brought it to a lawful end. For the Leaders of that body, it is plain, knew nothing of this secret, and were therefore at a great deal of pains to prove, and at last could hardly get themselves believed, that Charles himself had broken the *original Compact*. But unless this *Compact* stands upon a different footing from all other compacts in the world, we may safely pronounce, that a bargain or agreement, which has been made between two parties, can never be dissolved but by the consent of both of them; or by a fundamental misdemeanour in one; if the other party chuses to exact the forfeiture. Now, in the case of the Jews under Samuel, there was a *renunciation*, it is true, on the part of the People, or, in plainer English, a *REBELLION*. But God did not give way to it; he would not (as on the principles of civil justice he might) exact the forfeiture; which was, the withdrawing his protection. All this will be proved at large in its place. The *Theocracy*, therefore, still continued under their Kings; which were indeed no other than the *anointed*, or the Viceroys of God.—Such is our Preacher's success in attempting to shew Mr. Locke's principle to be *dark and imaginary*. Let us see next whether he has better fortune in proving his own to be *clear and solid*.

Now his way of justifying the Law, which punished idolatry with death, without the aid of the  
*theocratic*



*theocratic principle* is this.—“As the end for which the civil constitution of the Jews was formed, viz. to prevent their being over-run with idolatry, (which as it prevailed amongst the neighbouring nations, corrupted their internal sense of the difference of good and evil, and banished humanity and decency, and many of the most considerable and important of the social virtues, by introducing shameful impurities and human sacrifices, quite detestable to nature) as the end, I say, for which the civil constitution of the Jews was formed, appears, when thus explained, and abstracted from all consideration merely religious, to be wise and gracious in itself; and as the judicial Laws in that scheme of Government were admirably adapted to subserve and advance this wise and gracious end, it necessarily follows, that idolatry, which would have frustrated the whole design of the Constitution, and have entirely dissolved and destroyed it, must, upon the same reasons that are allowed to be just in all other Policies, have deserved capital punishment.”

Here we see our Preacher approves himself just as skilful in the *end* of Civil-government, as he did before, in its *nature and essence*. He appears not to know (what he might have seen proved in the first volume of this work) that civil Society must have one particular, distinct, and appropriated end; and that this end can be no other than security to the temporal liberty and property of man; because (as is there shewn) all other ends may be attained without civil Society. This then is the only proper end of Government. Yet our Preacher

falls into that exploded conceit, which makes any attainable end, so it be a good one, the legitimate business of civil Society, as such: which confounds this Society with all others, there being no way to keep the Civil distinct but by assigning it an end peculiar to itself. But his subject happening to be the *Jewish government*, it secured his reasoning from the glare of the absurdity. And his false and fallacious account of the *end* of its institution, with which he introduces his reasoning, gave a certain plausibility to the nonsense which followed. It is in these words, *The end for which the civil constitution was formed, was to prevent their being over-run with idolatry.* Now, by *civil constitution* a fair reasoner should mean (where the question is concerning the efficacy of a *mere* civil Government, in contradistinction to the Religious) the civil constitution of the Jews as it was so distinguished. But, in this sense, the *end* of the *civil constitution* of the Jews was the same with all other, namely, security to men's temporal liberty and property. It is true, if by their *civil constitution*, he meant both civil and religious, which here indeed was incorporated, and went under the common name of *LAW*; then indeed its *end was to prevent idolatry*; but then this is giving up the point, because that incorporation was the consequence of the *Theocratic* form of Government, or, to speak more properly, it was the *THEOCRACY* itself. Thus he comes round again to the place on which he had turned his back; and, before he knows where he is, establishes the very doctrine he would confute. In a word, our Preacher was got out of his depth; and here I shall leave him to sink or swim; only observing, that this great advocate of religious liberty has done his best (tho' certainly without design) to support a principle the most plausible of any  
that

that Persecutors for opinions can catch hold on, to justify their iniquitous practice; namely, *that civil government was ordained for the procuring all the good of all kinds, which it is even accidentally capable of advancing.* And to make sure work, he employs that adulterate gloss, which They so artfully put upon their wicked practice; viz. that it is *for the support of morality*: for who is so purblind that he cannot spy *immoralities* lurking in all heretical opinions? And thus it is that our Preacher defends civil Government, in punishing opinions: *The idolatry of the neighbouring nations* (says he) *corrupted their internal sense of the difference of good and evil, and banished humanity and decency, and many of the most considerable and important of the social virtues.* A reason constantly in the mouths, whatever hath been in the hearts, of Persecutors, from St. Austin to St. Dominic <sup>b</sup>.

## II.

We come, in the next place, to shew, that this THEOCRACY, as it was NECESSARY, so it would have an easy reception; being founded on the flattering notion, at that time universally entertained, of TUTELARY DEITIES, *Gentilitial and Local*. Thus, to carry on his great purpose, the Almighty very early represented himself to this chosen race, as a *Gentilitial* Deity, The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob <sup>c</sup>: Afterwards, when he preferred Judea

<sup>b</sup> Dr. Stebbing, tho' he differs from Mr. Foster in most other matters, yet agrees with him in this, "That the justice and equity of the Jewish Law in punishing Idolaters with death, did not depend on the particular form of government." [*Hist. of Abraham*] In which he is much more consistent than his dissenting neighbour. For the doctor approves of persecutions for opinions; whereas the minister pretends to condemn it.

<sup>c</sup> See JER. x, 16, and li. 19.



to all other countries for his personal residence, (on this account called HIS LAND <sup>d</sup>) he came under their idea of a *Local Deity*: which notion was an established principle in the Gentile world, as we have shewn above, from Plato. It was originally EGYPTIAN; and founded in an opinion that the earth was at first divided by its Creator, amongst a number of inferior and subordinate Divinities. The Septuagint translators appear to have understood the following passage, in the song of Moses, as alluding to this opinion;—*When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people* ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. *For the Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance<sup>e</sup>*: For, instead of, *according to the number of the children of Israel* (which if they found in the text, they understood no more than later critics) they wrote κατὰ ἀριθμὸν Ἀγγέλων Θεῶ, ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE ANGELS OF GOD. Which at least is intelligible, as referring to that old notion, original to the country where this translation was made. And Justin Martyr tells us<sup>f</sup>, that in the beginning, God had committed the government of the world to angels, who, abusing their trust, were degraded from their regency. But whether he learnt it from this translation, or took it from a worse place, I shall not pretend to determine.

The Land, thus selected by God for his personal residence, he bestows upon his chosen People. Be-

<sup>d</sup> LEVIT. xxv. 23. DEUT. xi. 12. PS. x. 16. IS. xiv. 25. JER. ii. 7. Chap. xvi. ver. 18. EZEK. xxxv. 10. Chap. xxxvii. ver. 5, 20. Chap. xxxviii. ver. 16. WISD. OF SOL. xii. 7.

<sup>e</sup> DEUT. xxxii. 8, 9.

<sup>f</sup> Aologet. i.

*bold (says he) the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession<sup>e</sup>. This too was according to the common notions of those times. Thus Jephthah, who appears to have been half paganized by a bad education, speaks to the King of the Ammonites, Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy God giveth thee to possess? So, whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess<sup>h</sup>.*

It was no wonder, therefore, when God was thus pleased, for the wise ends of his providence, to be considered, by a prejudiced people, in this character, that all the pagan nations round about should regard the GOD OF ISRAEL no otherwise than as a local tutelary Deity; too apt, by their common prejudices, to see him only under that idea. Thus he is called the God of the Land<sup>i</sup>,—the God of the Hills<sup>k</sup>, &c. And it is expressly said, that *they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the Gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man<sup>l</sup>*. By which is meant, that they treated him as a local tutelary Deity, of a confined and bounded power: for it was not the old pagan way to speak against one another's Gods, in discredit of their Divinity: and this circumscribed dominion was esteemed, by them, no discredit to it: But, by the Jews, the worshipers of the true God, it was justly held to be the greatest. Therefore, to call the God of Israel *the God of the hills, and not of the plain*, was speaking against him.

<sup>e</sup> DEUT. xxxii. 49.

<sup>h</sup> JUDG. xi. 24.

<sup>i</sup> 2 KINGS,

xvii. 26. Chap. xviii. ver. 33, &<sup>g</sup> seq.

<sup>k</sup> 1 KINGS,

xx. 23.

<sup>l</sup> 2 CHRON. xxxii. 19.

For,



For, here again we must observe, that when God, agreeably to the whole method of this Dispensation, takes advantage of, or indulges his people in, any habituated notion or custom, he always interweaves some characteristic note of difference, to mark the institution for his own. Thus in this indulgence of their prejudices concerning a tutelary God.

1. He first institutes, upon it, a *Theocracy*; a practice just the reverse of paganism: for there Kings became Gods; whereas here God condescended to become King<sup>m</sup>.

<sup>m</sup> It is strange to consider how much Dr. *Spencer* has mistaken this matter, where, in his reasons of a *Theocracy ex parte seculi*, as he calls them, he gives the following: "Seculi moribus ita factum erat, ut Dii sui principatum quendam inter servos suos obtinerent, & nomine ritumque regio colerentur. Nam seculo illo Deos titulis illis *Molech, Elohim, Baalim* & hujusmodi aliis, regibus & magnatibus tribui solitis, insignire solebant: eos imperii arbitros plerumque ponebant, cum nec bella gerere, nec civitatem condere, nec regem eligere, nec grandius aliquid moliri solerent, priusquam Deos per oracula vel auspicia consulissent." *Dissert. de Theoc. Jud.* c. iii. p. 237. *Ed. Chap.* But these are no marks that the Pagans attributed any kind of civil regality to their Gods. As to their regal titles, those were what they had retained from the time of their real kingship in the state of humanity. And as to the consulting their oracles on all public affairs of moment, this was the consequence of pagan religion's having a public as well as private part. But, for an acknowledged God to be chosen and received by any people as their real Monarch or Civil Magistrate, was a thing altogether unknown to Paganism. The learned *Marshall*, with his usual bias, endeavours to insinuate, that the institution of a *Theocracy* was an imitation of Pagan Custom. — Moses pridem *Omnepotens* declaravit *Ebræorum* Rempublicam; ne sibi potestas regia deferretur: Athenienses autem *Omnepotens* suam ab *Apolline* retulerunt; ut regis nomen *Jovi* cederet; neque tam titulus quam potestas regia imminueretur. *Sec. xiii.* p. 349.—But the question here is not about the name, but the thing. The Pagans might call their national Gods by the name of Kings, and, by a bolder figure, might call their Govern-



2. Secondly, he forbids all kind of community or intercourse between the God of Israel and the Gods of the Nations, either by joining their worship to his, or so much as owning their Divinity. Thus were the Israelites distinguished from all other people in the most effectual manner: for, as we have often had occasion to observe, there was a general intercommunity amongst the Gods of paganism: They acknowledged one another's pretensions; they borrowed one another's titles; and, at length, entered into a kind of partnership of Worship. All the Pagan nations, we see, owned the God of Israel for a tutelary Deity<sup>n</sup>. But His followers were not permitted to be so complaisant. There was to be no fellowship between God and Belial; though a good understanding always subsisted between Belial and Dagon.

But, amidst a vast number of characteristic circumstances proving the origin of the MOSAIC RELIGION to have been different from that of every other nation, there is none more illustrious than this, *That the Mosaic religion was built upon a former*, namely the PATRIARCHAL: whereas the various Religions of the Pagan world were all unrelated to, and independent of any other<sup>o</sup>.

And yet the famous Author of *The grounds and reasons of the Christian Religion* hath been hardy enough to employ one whole chapter to prove, that

ment, put under the protection of a tutelary Deity, by the name of a *Theocracy*; but a real Theocracy is that only where the Laws of the Institution have all a reference to the actual rule of a tutelary God, whether the true God or false ones; and such a Theocracy is no where to be found but in the land of Judea.

<sup>n</sup> 2 KINGS xviii. 25. JER. iv. 2, 3.  
279, & seq. ed. 2.

<sup>o</sup> See vol. i. p.

*this method of introducing Christianity into the world, by building and grounding it on the Old Testament, is agreeable to the common method of introducing new Revelations, whether real or PRETENDED, or any changes in religion; and also the nature of things<sup>r</sup>.*

“ For if (says he) we consider the various revolutions and changes in religion, whereof we have  
 “ any tolerable history, in their beginning, we  
 “ shall find them, for the most part, to be grafted  
 “ on some old stock, or founded on some preceding  
 “ revelations, which they were either to supply,  
 “ or fulfil, or retrieve from corrupt glosses, innovations, and traditions, with which by time they  
 “ were incumbered: and this, which MAY SEEM  
 “ MATTER OF SURPRISE TO THOSE, WHO DO NOT  
 “ REFLECT on the changeable nature of all things,  
 “ hath happened; though the old revelations far  
 “ from intending any change, ingraftment, or new  
 “ dispensation, *did for the most part declare they were*  
 “ *to last for ever*, and did forbid all alterations and  
 “ innovations, they being the last dispensation intended<sup>s</sup>. ”

Here are two things asserted: 1. That the building new Religions and new Revelations upon old was agreeable to the common method of the ancient world. 2. That it was agreeable to the nature of things. These are discoveries one would little have expected.

I. Let us first examine his FACTS.—But to judge truly of their force, we must remember, that the observation is made to discredit what Believers call true Revelation, by shewing that all false Religions have taken the same method of propagation.



1. His first point is, *That this method was agreeable to the common practice of the ancient world.* Would not one expect now an instance of some confessedly false Religion, between the time of ABRAHAM and CHRIST, which pretended to be built on some preceding Revelation? Without doubt: If it were only for this, that there is no other way of proving the proposition. Besides, to say the truth, such an instance would be well worth attending to, for its extreme curiosity. But he could not give the reader what was not to be had: and therefore he endeavours to make up this deficiency of *fact*, by shewing, 1. That the JEWISH Religion, like the CHRISTIAN, pretended to be built on a preceding. “Thus the mission of Moses  
 “to the Israelites (says he) supposed a former re-  
 “velation of God (who from the beginning seems  
 “to have been constantly giving a succession of dis-  
 “pensations and revelations) to their ancestors;  
 “and many of the religious precepts of Moses  
 “were borrowed, or had an agreement with the re-  
 “ligious rites of the heathens, with whom the  
 “Israelites had correspondence, and particularly  
 “with the religious rites of the Egyptians, (who  
 “upon that account seem confounded with the  
 “Israelites by some pagans, as both their religious  
 “rites were equally, and at the same time, pro-  
 “hibited by others) to whose religious rites the  
 “Israelites seem to have been *Conformists* during  
 “their abode in Egypt.” Go thy way, for a good Reasoner!—To prove that false revelations had the same pretensions of dependency on a preceding, as the true have had, he shews that all the true had these pretensions. But this is but half the achievement. The best part is still behind. ’Tis a rarity;



a blunder ingrafted on a sophism. He was not content to say that Moses founded his Religion on the Patriarchal: he must needs go on,—*And many of the religious précepts of Moses were borrowed, or had an agreement with the religious rites of the Heathens, with whom the Israelites had correspondence, and particularly with the religious Rites of the Egyptians.* Now, how it comes to pass that Moses's borrowing from the religious Rites of the Egyptians, whose religion he formally condemned of falshood, should be metamorphosed into an example of one Religion's being founded upon, or receiving its authority from, another, I confess, I cannot comprehend. If he were not at the head of the FREETHINKERS, I should suspect some small confusion in his ideas: and that this great Reasoner was unable to distinguish between, *a Religion's supporting itself on one preceding, which it acknowledged to be true; and a Religion's complying, for the sake of inveterate prejudices, with some innocent practices of another religion, which it was erected to overthrow, as false.*

2. He shews next, that those false religions which came AFTER the Jewish and the Christian, and are confessed to mimick their peculiarities, pretended to be built on preceding revelations.—*“ The mission of Zoroaster to the Persians supposed the religion of the Magians; which had been, for many ages past, the antient national religion of the Medes as well as Persians. The mission of Mahomet supposed Christianity; as that did, Judaism.”* This is still better. The design of his general observation, *That it was the common method for new revelations to be built and grounded*

on preceding revelations, was to shew that the revelations, which we call true, imitated the false. And he proves it,—by shewing that the false imitated the true. That Mahomet's did so, is agreed on all hands. And those bewildered men who would have us credit the story of a *late* Zoroaster, do, and must suppose that he borrowed from Judaism. But the truth is, the whole is an idle tale, invented by Persian writers under the early Califs. However, tho' the Zoroaster of Hyde and Prideaux be a mere phantom, yet the Religion called by his name, was a real thing, and started up in the first ages of Mahometism, with a Bible to support its credit, in imitation of, and to oppose to, the Alcoran. But this neat device unluckily detects the whole imposture: For in the Age of Mahomet, and in the time of the first Commentators on the Alcoran, the Persians were esteemed by them, as Idolaters, and without a Bible; (and they had good Opportunity, by their constant commerce thither, to be well informed :) Which is agreeable to every thing that the earlier and the later Greek Writers unanimously deliver of the Persian Religion. But that, on the appearance of Mahometanism, the Persians should do what the Greeks did on the first appearance of Christianity, refine their old idolatrous worship, till they brought it to what Hyde and Prideaux observe it is at this day, amongst the remainder of the Magian sect in Persia and India, is nothing strange. The wonder is, that these learned men should have swallowed so gross a cheat, on the testimony of later Mahometan Writers; who had so many motives to support it, and so slender abilities to detect it; whose propensity to fabling is so great as even to discredit any truth that rests on their authority; and whose talents in the art of lying are so little proportioned



to their inclination to exercise it, that they never fail of defeating their own impositions. This argument, therefore, was in all respects worthy the Author of *The Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*.

3. Lastly, he tells us, that “the Siamese and Brachmans both pretend that they have had a *succession of incarnate deities* amongst them, who at due distances of time, have brought new Revelations from heaven; each succeeding one depending on the former; and that religion is to be conveyed on, in that way, for ever.”—— He promised to prove a succession of Religions in the ancient world, the later founded and depending on the preceding: And he proves—a *succession of incarnate deities*, talked of amongst the MODERN pagans of India and Siam; and, from this succession concludes for a succession of DEPENDENT RELIGIONS, of which they have no kind of notion. Nor are these extravagancies, which their priests do indeed talk of, any other than late inventions of their priests, to oppose to Mahometan and Christian Missionaries. But a *succession of incarnate deities* was so arch a ridicule on the mysteries of our holy faith, that it was to be brought in at any rate. But now the joke is over, let me tell him, he need not have gone so far for it. Were not Coelus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, &c. a *succession of incarnate deities*? yet were any of the Religions, which had those Gods for their author or object, FOUNDED OR DEPENDENT ON (tho’ they succeeded to) one another? Here again, our sagacious Freethinker was at a fault; and, with all his logic, could not



distinguish between *one Religion's being built upon another*, and *one Religion's simply succeeding another*.

II. He comes next to the NATURE OF THINGS. The reader has seen how short he falls of his reckoning from *fact*: But let him fairly make up his accounts, and we shall not differ with him about his way of payment; but willingly receive his deficiencies of Fact, in Reason.—“If we consider  
 “ (says he) the *nature of things*, we shall find that  
 “ it must be difficult, if not impossible, to introduce amongst men (who in all civilized countries  
 “ are bred up in the belief of some revealed religion) a revealed religion wholly new, or such  
 “ as has no reference to a preceding one: for that  
 “ would be to combat all men in too many respects,  
 “ and not to proceed on a sufficient number of  
 “ principles necessary to be assented to by those,  
 “ on whom the first impressions of a new religion  
 “ are proposed to be made.”

Here his head was full of the theologic ideas of modern times; where one Religion is maintained and propagated on the destruction of all the rest. And that indeed would be *combating all men in too many respects*, without good evidence in the Religion thus proposed. But had he had the least knowledge of Antiquity, he would have known that the Gentile religions of those times were founded on different principles, and propagated on different practices. Not one of those numerous Religions ever pretended to accuse another of falshood; and therefore was never itself in danger of being so accused. They very amicably owned one another's

pretensions; and all that a new Religion claimed, was to be let into partnership with the rest, whose common practice was to trade in shares<sup>r</sup>. Yet according to this great Philosopher, *it was difficult, if not impossible—it was combating all men in too many respects.—It was not proceeding on a sufficient number of principles necessary to be assented to, &c.* But he can make Men, as well as Religions, change their natures when he wants them for some glorious mischief. It is his more usual way, and so it is of all his fellows, to make the People, (the gross body of mankind) run headlong into Religion, without the least inquiry after evidence. But here we are told *it is very difficult, if not impossible, to induce them to think well of a Religion which hath not the most plausible evidence for its support: That the not giving them this, is not proceeding on a sufficient number of principles, but combating all men in too many respects, &c.*

And this is all we can get out of him, FROM THE NATURE OF THINGS. But as he has raised a curiosity which he knew not how to gratify, I shall endeavour to supply his ignorance; and, from this *nature of things*, shew the reader, 1. How the Religions of MOSES and JESUS must NECESSARILY SUPPOSE a *dependency* on some preceding. 2. How the ancient Religions of paganism must NECESSARILY NOT SUPPOSE any such *dependency*; and 3. How it came to pass, that more modern Impostors, risen since the coming of Christianity, imitated the true, rather than the false Religions of ancient times, in this pretence to *dependency*.

I. The PATRIARCHAL, the JEWISH, and the CHRISTIAN Religions, all professed to come from

<sup>r</sup> See the first vol. part II. p. 36. & seq. 4th Ed.



the only one God, the Creator of all things. Now as the whole race of mankind must be the common object of its Creator's care, all his Revelations, even those given only to a part, must needs be thought ultimately directed to the interest of the whole: consequently, every later Revelation must suppose the TRUTH of the preceding. Again, when several successive Revelations are given by him, some less, some more extensive, we must conclude them to be the parts of ONE ENTIRE DISPENSATION; which, for reasons best known to infinite Wisdom, are gradually enlarged and opened: consequently every later must not only suppose the TRUTH of every preceding Revelation, but likewise their mutual RELATION and DEPENDENCY. Hence we see, there may be weighty reasons, why *God, from the beginning, should have been constantly giving a succession of Dispensations and Revelations*<sup>7</sup>; as this Author, with a lewd sneer, seems to take a pleasure in observing. If therefore, what we call the true Revelation came from God, these Religions must needs be, and profess to be, dependent on one another.

II. Let us see next how the case stood in the ancient Pagan world. Their pretended Revelations were not from the ONE GOD; but all from local tutelary Deities; each of which was supposed to be employed in the care of his own Country or People, and unconcerned in every Other's department. Consequently, between earlier and later Revelations of this kind, there could be no more dependency, than there was opposition: But each stood on its own foundation, single, unrelated, and original.



III. But when, by the propagation of the Gospel, the knowledge of the ONLY ONE GOD was spread abroad over the whole earth, and the absurdities of Polytheism fully understood by the people, an Impostor, who would now obtrude a new Religion on the world, must of necessity pretend to have received it from that *only one God*: But the probability of his giving a Revelation now, being seen greatly to depend on his having given one before, our Impostor would be forced to own the truth of those preceding Religions, which professed to come from that God. And as the credit of the new Religion was best advanced by its being thought a finishing part of an incomplete Dispensation, he would, at the same time, bottom it on the preceding. Besides, as an Impostor must needs want that necessary mark of a divine Mission, the power of Miracles, he could cover the want no otherwise than by a pretended relation to a Religion which had well established itself by Miracles. And thus, in fact, MAHOMET framed the idea of his imposture. He pretended his new Religion was the completion of Christianity, as Christianity was the completion of Judaism; for that the world not being to be won by the mild and gentle invitations of Jesus, was now to be *compelled to enter in* by Mahomet. And so again, to complete the imitation, this last and greatest Prophet, as his followers believe him to be, is pretended to be foretold in the New Testament, as the Messiah was in the Old.

Thus this notable observation, from whence the Author of *the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* endeavoured to deduce so discrediting a likeness between all *false* religion, and what we believers

believers hold to be the *true*, comes, we see, just to nothing.

But he has yet another flagrant mark of *likeness*, in reserve: And thus he goes on, from discovery to discovery.—*In building thus upon PROPHECY* (says he) *as a principle, Jesus and his Apostles had the concurrence of all sects of Religion amongst the Pagans.* Is it possible? Yes. *For the Pagans universally built their Religion on DIVINATION<sup>2</sup>.* As much as to say, the people of Amsterdam, in building their town-house upon piles, had (in the mode of laying a foundation) the concurrence of all the cities in England; who build theirs upon stone, or clay, or gravel. In the Jewish writings there are Prophecies of a future and more perfect Dispensation; which, Jesus claiming to belong to *HIS*, his Religion was properly built upon PROPHECIES. The Heathens made Gods of their dead benefactors, and then consulted them at their shrines, as Oracles; they inspected the entrails of beasts; they observed the flight of birds; they interpreted dreams and uncommon phænomena; and all these things they called DIVINATION. But what likeness is there between these things and Prophecies, the Prophecies on which Jesus founded his Religion? Just as much as there is between TRUTH and what these men call, FREE-THINKING. But he has found a device to bring them related. 'Tis a master-piece; and the Reader shall not be robbed of it. *They [the Pagans] says he, learnt that art [Divination] in schools, or under discipline, as the Jews did prophesying in the schools and colleges of the Prophets; where, the learned Dodswell says, the candidates for Prophecy*

<sup>2</sup> *Grounds and Reasons, &c.* p. 27, 28.

were taught the rules of divination practised by the Pagans, who were skilled therein, and in possession of the art long before them<sup>a</sup>. This idle whimsy of the learned Dodwell concerning the schools of the Prophets has been exposed, as it deserves, already<sup>b</sup>. But for the sake of so extraordinary an argument, (an impiety, grafted on its proper stock an absurdity) it deserves to be admitted, tho' it be but for a moment. The reasoning then stands thus: Divination was an art learnt in the schools; so was one kind of Prophecy, or the Jewish art of divination: those who learnt this Jewish art of divination were taught the rules of pagan divination: THEREFORE pagan divination and ANOTHER kind of Prophecy, such as foretold the coming of the Messiah, were things of the same kind. Incomparable reasoner! and deservedly placed at the head of modern Free-thinking! But his learning is equal to his sense, and his premises just as true as his conclusion: *The Pagans universally built their Religion on divination.* I believe there are few school-boys, who would not laugh at his blunder, and tell him it was just otherwise, *that the Pagans universally built divination on their Religion.* All that was ever built on divination was now and then a Shrine or a Temple. To return,

## III.

But these prejudices, concerning local tutelary Deities, which made the introduction of a Theocracy so easy, occasioned as easy a defection from the Laws of it.

1. For these tutelary Deities owning one another's pretensions, there was always a friendly intercourse

<sup>a</sup> See p. 42, & seq. of this Vol.

<sup>b</sup> P. 28.



of mutual honours, tho' not always, of mutual worship. For at first, each God was supposed to be so taken up with his own people, as to have little leisure or inclination to attend to the concerns of others.—Now this prejudice was the *first* source of the Jewish idolatry.

2. But the pretensions of these Gods being thus reciprocally acknowledged; and Some, by the fortunate circumstances of their followers, being risen into superior fame, the Rites used in their Worship were eagerly affected. And this was the *second* source of the Israelites' idolatry; exemplified in the erection of the GOLDEN CALF, and their fondness for all Egyptian superstitions in general.

3. But of these tutelary deities their being two sorts, GENTILITIAL and LOCAL; the one ambulatory, and the other stationed; the latter were fixed to their posts, as a kind of *beir-loom*, which they who conquered and possessed the country, were obliged to maintain in their accustomed honours. And whatever *gentilitial* Gods a People might bring with them, yet the *local* God was to have a necessary share in the religious Worship of the new Comers. Nay it was thought impiety even in foreigners, while they sojourned only in a strange Country, not to sacrifice to the Gods of the place. Thus Sophocles makes Antigone say to her father, that a stranger should both venerate and abhor those things which are venerated and abhorred in the city where he resides<sup>c</sup>. Celsus gives the reason of so much complaisance.—“Because

<sup>c</sup> Τόλμα ξυῖν.

Ἐπὶ ξένῳ, ὃ γλῶσσος, ἢ, τε

καὶ πόλιν τίτρεσθαι ἀφίλον

Ἀποτυγῆν καὶ τὸ φίλον σέβεισθαι. *Αἰ.* ἢ *Oedip. Colen.*

(says

(says he) the several parts of the world were, from the beginning, distributed to several powers, each of which has his peculiar allotment and residence<sup>d</sup>. And those who were loth to leave their paternal Gods when they sought new settlements, at least held themselves obliged to worship them with the Rites, and according to the usages of the Country they came to inhabit. Against this more qualified principle of Paganism, Moses thought fit to caution his People, in the following words: *When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them and dwellest in their land; take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou ENQUIRE NOT AFTER THEIR GODS, saying, HOW did these nations serve their Gods? even so WILL I DO likewise*<sup>e</sup>. But the adoption of these new Gods, as well as of their Rites, was so general, that David makes his being unjustly driven into an idolatrous land, the same thing as being forced to serve idolatrous Gods. For thus he expostulates with his persecutor, “ Now therefore I  
 “ pray thee let my lord the king hear the words of  
 “ his servant: If the Lord have stirred thee up  
 “ against me, let him accept an offering: but if they  
 “ be the children of men, cursed be they before  
 “ the Lord; for they have driven me out this day  
 “ from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying,

<sup>d</sup> — ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτι, ὡς εἰπὲς, τὰ μέρη τῆς γῆς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἄλλα ἄλλοις ποταῖς διμενόμενα, καὶ κατὰ τινὰς ἐπικρατείας διειλεγμένα, ταύτη καὶ φαίνεται. καὶ δὴ τα παρ' ἰσχυροῦς ὁρθῶς ἀντιτάττειν ταύτη δόγματι, καὶ ἐκείνοις φίλοι, παρακαλεῖν δὲ ἕχουσιν εἶναι τὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατὰ τόπους μεμενόμενα. Orig. cont. Cels. lib. v. p. 247. See the passage, in Plato, p. 230, 231.

"GO SERVE OTHER GODS '." To the same principle Jeremiah likewise alludes, in the following words, *Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers: and THERE SHALL YE SERVE OTHER GODS day and night, where I will not shew you favour*<sup>2</sup>. By which is not meant that they should be *forced*, any otherwise than by the superstitious dread of divine vengeance for a slighted worship: for at this time civil restraint in matters of religion was very rare.

But the imaginary vengeance which the tutelary God was supposed to take on those, who, inhabiting his Land, yet slighted his Worship, was at length really taken on the idolatrous Cutheans, when they came to cultivate the land of Israel. For the Almighty having, in condescension to the prejudices of the Israelites, assumed the title of a TUTELARY LOCAL GOD, and chosen Judea for his peculiar regency; it appeared but fit that he should discharge, in good earnest, the imaginary function of those tutelary Gods, in order to distinguish himself from *the lying Vanities* of that infatuated age. Therefore when so great a portion of his Chosen people had been led captive, and a mixt rabble of Eastern idolaters were put into their place, he sent plagues amongst them for their profanation of the holy Land. Which calamity their own principles easily enabled them to account for. The story is told in these words: "And the king  
" of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from  
" Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath,  
" and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the  
" cities of Samaria, instead of the children of

<sup>1</sup> 1 SAM. xxvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xvi. ver. 13.

" Israel;



“ Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt  
 “ in the cities thereof. And so it was, at the be-  
 “ ginning of their dwelling there, that they fear-  
 “ ed not the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions  
 “ amongst them which slew some of them. Where-  
 “ fore they spake to the king of Assyria, say-  
 “ ing, The nations which thou hast removed, and  
 “ placed in the cities of Samaria KNOW NOT THE  
 “ MANNER OF THE GOD OF THE LAND: therefore  
 “ he hath sent lions amongst them; and behold  
 “ they slay them, because they know not the man-  
 “ ner of the God of the land. Then the king of  
 “ Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of  
 “ the Priests — and let him teach them *the manner*  
 “ *of the God of the land.* — Then one of the Priests  
 “ came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them  
 “ how they should fear the Lord. Howbeit every  
 “ nation made Gods of their own — every nation  
 “ in their cities wherein they dwelt. — So these  
 “ nations feared the Lord and served their graven  
 “ images, both their children and their childrens  
 “ children, as did their fathers, so do they unto  
 “ this day <sup>b</sup>.”

But least this account of the miraculous inter-  
 position should be misunderstood as an encourage-  
 ment of the notion of local Gods, or of *in-*  
*tercommunity* of worship, rather than a vindica-  
 tion of the sanctity of that Country, which was  
 consecrated to the God of Israel, the sacred Histo-  
 rian goes on to acquaint us with the perverse in-  
 fluence this judgment had on the new inhabitants,  
 so contrary to the divine intention. “ They  
 “ feared the Lord, and served their own Gods  
 “ after the manner of the nations, whom they

<sup>b</sup> 2 KINGS xvii. 24. & seq.

“ carried

“carried away from thence. Unto this day, they do after the former manners: they fear not the Lord, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the Law and Commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob whom he named Israel.” *They feared the Lord and served their own Gods;* that is, they feared the vengeance impending on the exclusion of the Worship of the God of Israel. *But they feared not the Lord, neither did after their Statutes.* That is, they transgressed the Commandment which they found so frequently repeated in the Pentateuch, of joining no other Worship to that of the God of Israel.

And this was the true reason why the Kings of Persia and Syria, (when Judea afterwards became a province to them) so frequently appointed sacrifices to be offered to the *God of the land*, at Jerusalem, in behalf of themselves and families. Nor was the practice disused when the Jews fell under the Roman yoke; both Julius Cæsar and Augustus making the same provision for the *felicity* of the Empire.

Hence therefore the *third* source of the Jewish idolatries. It was this superstitious reverence to local Deities within their own departments, which made them so devoted, while in Egypt, to the Gods of that Country; and when in possession of their own land, to the tutelary Gods of Canaan.

But this *intercommunity* of Worship, begun by the migration of People and Colonies from one country to another, grew more general, as those

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 33, 34.



migrations became more frequent. 'Till at length the frequency, aided by many other concurrent causes (occasionally taken notice of in several places of this work) made the *intercommunity* universal. And this was the *last* source of Jewish idolatries. This drew them into the service of every God they heard of; or from whom they fancied any special good might be obtained; especially the Gods of all great and powerful Nations. These prejudices of opinion, joined to those of practice which they had learnt in Egypt, where the true causes of their so frequent lapse into idolatry.

From all this it appears, that their defection from the God of Israel, wicked and abominable as it was, did not however consist in the rejecting him as a false God, or in renouncing the Law of Moses as a false Religion; but only, in joining foreign Worship and idolatrous Ceremonies to the Ritual of the true God. Their bias to the idolatries of Egypt was inveterate custom; their inclination for the idolatries of Canaan was a prevailing principle that the tutelary God of the place should be worshiped by its inhabitants; and their motive for all other idolatries, a vain expectation of good from the guardian Gods of famous and happy Nations.

These were all inflamed by that common stimulation of a debauched People, the luxurious and immoral rites of Paganism; for it is to be observed that these defections generally happened amidst the abuses of prosperity. There is a remarkable passage in the Book of Joshua which sets this matter in a very clear light. The Israelites having lapsed into idolatry, Joshua drew together their Heads and Rulers at Shechem, in order to a reformation.



And the topic, he insists upon for this purpose, is not, that the God of Israel was the only true God, the Maker of all things; but that he was the family-God of the race of Abraham, for which he had done so great things. And this he prosecutes from the 2d verse of the xxiv. chap. to the 13th. His conclusion from all is, "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity, and in truth," and put away the Gods which your Fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt<sup>k</sup>." However (continues he) at least make your choice, and either serve the Lord, or serve the Gods of other People. "And the people answered, God forbid we should forsake the Lord to serve other Gods<sup>l</sup>: for we acknowledge him to be that God who has done so great things for us." To this Joshua replies, "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins<sup>m</sup>." From all this, it appears, that the point debated between Joshua and his People, was not whether the Israelites should return to God, whom they had rejected and forsaken; but whether they should serve him ONLY, or, as Joshua expresses it, serve him in sincerity and in truth. For on their exclaiming against the impiety of rejecting God,—"God forbid, we should forsake the Lord; we will still serve him;" meaning along with the other Gods,—their Leader replies, *Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an HOLY God: he is a JEALOUS God.* i. e. As a holy God, he will not be served with the lewd and polluted Rites of the Nations; and as a jealous God, he will not suffer you to serve Idols of wood and stone with his Rites. The consequence is, You must serve him alone, and only with that worship which he himself hath appointed.

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 14.<sup>l</sup> Ver. 16, 17.<sup>m</sup> Ver. 19.  
That

That this was the whole of their Idolatry, is farther seen from the accounts which the holy Prophets give us of it, in their reproofs and expostulations.

ISAIAH says, *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord: I am full of the Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts, &c.*<sup>n</sup>. To whom are these words addressed: To those who, besides their numerous Immoralities, there reckoned up at large, delighted in idolatrous worship in Groves and high Places. For the Denunciation is thus continued: *They shall be ashamed of the OAKS which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the GARDENS that ye have chosen*<sup>o</sup>. He describes them again in this manner: *A People that provoketh me to Anger continually TO MY FACE, that sacrificeth in Gardens, and burneth Incense upon Altars of Brick*<sup>p</sup>. Yet, at the same time, these men gloried so much in being the peculiar People of the Lord, that they said, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*<sup>q</sup>.

JEREMIAH draws them in the very same colours: *Though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely*<sup>r</sup>, i. e. vainly, idolatrously. Why? The Reason is given soon after; they swore likewise by their idols: *How shall I pardon thee for this? thy Children have forsaken me, and SWORN BY THEM THAT ARE NO GODS*<sup>s</sup>. Again, *Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and SWEAR FALSLY and BURN INCENSE UNTO BAAL, and walk after other Gods that ye know not; [i. e. strange Gods]*

<sup>n</sup> Chap. i. ver. 11.  
ver. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Ver. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 29.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. v. ver. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. lxy.

<sup>t</sup> Ver. 7.

and come and STAND BEFORE ME IN THIS HOUSE, which is called by my Name, and say, *We are delivered to do all these Abominations* ? And in another place we find them thus expostulating with the Prophet, — *Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this Evil against us? or what is our Iniquity, or what is our Sin that we have committed against the Lord our God* ? and the Prophet answering them in this manner, — *because your Fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and walked after other Gods, and have served them, and have worshiped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my Law : And ye have done worse than your Fathers* \*. But is it possible they could be so exceeding stupid or impudent as to talk at this rate, had they ever renounced the RELIGION, or the GOD of their Forefathers ?

EZEKIEL, likewise, shews plainly that their idolatries consisted in polluting the Religion of Moses with foreign worship : “ Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their Face : SHALL I BE INQUIRED OF *at all by them* ? ” Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD, Every man of the house of Israel that putteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of iniquity before his face, and cometh to the Prophet, I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols †, &c.” And again : *As for you, O house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me : but POLLUTE YE MY HOLY NAME NO MORE with your*

\* Chap. vii. ver. 9, 10.

† Chap. xvi. ver. 10.

‡ Ver. 11, 12.

§ Chap. xiv. ver. 3, 4.



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*gifts and with your idols*<sup>a</sup>, i. e. with gifts offered up to me with idolatrous Rites. In another place he giveth a terrible instance of this horrid mixture: “ They have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire to devour them. Moreover this they have done unto me : THEY HAVE DEFILED MY SANCTUARY IN THE SAME DAY, and have profaned my Sabbaths. For when they had slain their Children to their idols, then THEY CAME THE SAME DAY INTO MY SANCTUARY to profane it ; and lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house <sup>a</sup>.” These, and innumerable other passages in the Prophets to the same purpose, evidently shew, that this defection from the God of Israel consisted not in a rejection of Him, or of his Law,

This appears **still** more evident from the following considerations :

1. That, in the course of their idolatries, they abused the memorials of their own Dispensation to superstitious Worship. Such as the *Brazen Serpent* of Moses; to which, in the time of their kings, they paid divine honours<sup>b</sup>. And I am much mistaken if the monument of *Twelve stones*, taken out of Jordan, and pitched in Gilgal for a memorial of their miraculous passage<sup>c</sup>, was not equally abused. What induces me to think so, is the following passage of ISAIAH : “ Draw near hither, ye sons of the sorcerers, the seed of the adulterers

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xx. ver. 39.

<sup>b</sup> 2 KINGS xviii. 4.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xxiii. ver. 37, — 39.

<sup>c</sup> JOSH. iv. 3, 20, 21, 22.

“ and the whore. Against whom do you sport  
 “ yourselves?—enflaming yourselves with idols  
 “ under every green tree, slaying the children in  
 “ the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?  
 “ AMONG THE SMOOTH STONES OF THE STREAM  
 “ IS THY PORTION; they, they are thy lot: EVEN  
 “ TO THEM HAST THOU POURED A DRINK-OFFER-  
 “ ING, thou hast offered a meat-offering. Should  
 “ I receive comfort in these<sup>d</sup>?”

2 The Israelites were most prone to idolatry in PROSPEROUS TIMES; and generally returned to the God of their fathers in ADVERSITY, as appears from their whole history. Against this impotence of mind they were more than once cautioned, before they entered into the Land of Blessings, that they might afterwards be left without excuse. “ And it shall be (says Moses) when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggest not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not, when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the Land of Egypt from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other Gods, of the Gods of the people which are round about you<sup>e</sup>.” However Moses himself lived to see an example of this perversity, while they remained

<sup>d</sup> ISAIAH lvii. 3, & seq.  
 and chap. viii. ver. 11, & seq.

<sup>e</sup> DEUT. vi. 10, & seq.

in the Wilderuess: But Jeshurun (says he) waxed fat, and kicked: Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation<sup>f</sup>. And the Prophet HOSEA assures us, that the Day of prosperity was the constant season of their idolatry: *Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself*: ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF HIS FRUIT, HE HATH INCREASED THE ALTARS; ACCORDING TO THE GOODNESS OF HIS LAND THEY HAVE MADE GOODLY IMAGES<sup>g</sup>. And again: *According to their pasture so were they filled*; THEY WERE FILLED, AND THEIR HEART WAS EXALTED: *therefore have they forgotten me*<sup>h</sup>. This, therefore, is a clear proof that their defection from the God of Israel was not any doubt of his goodness or his power, but a wanton abuse of his blessings. Had they questioned the truth of the Law, their behaviour had been naturally otherwise: they would have adhered to it in times of prosperity; and would have left it in adversity and trouble. This the Deists would do well to consider.

3. The terms, in which God's warnings against this defection are expressed, plainly shew that their lapse into Idolatry was no rejection of him: he will have no FELLOWSHIP OR COMMUNION with false Gods. The names employed to design their idolatries are ADULTERY and WHOREDOM. And God's resentment of their defection, is perpetually expressed by the same metaphor: which shews that his right over them was still acknowledged, just as an adulterous wife owns the husband's right,

<sup>f</sup> DEUT. xxxii. 15.  
ver. 6.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. x. ver. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. xiii.



amidst all her pollutions with strangers. Where, we may observe, that though their idolatry is so constantly styled ADULTERY, yet that of the Pagans never is; though it is very often called WHOREDOM. The reason of this distinction is plainly intimated in the following words of Ezekiel: "How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord God, seeing thou dost all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman? In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street, and has NOT BEEN AS AN HARLOT (in that thou scornest hire) but AS A WIFE that committeth ADULTERY, which taketh strangers instead of her husband<sup>1</sup>." The Jews had entered into a covenant with God, which had made them his Peculiar: and when they had violated their plighted faith, they stood in that relation to him which an ADULTRESS does to her injured husband. The Gentiles, on the contrary, had entered into no *exclusive* engagements with their Gods, but the practice of *intercommunity* had prostituted them, as a common HARLOT, to all comers.

Thus much, however, must be confessed, that though the very worst of their idolatry consisted only in mixing foreign Worship with their own; yet, in their mad attention to those abominable things, God's Worship was often so extremely neglected, that He says, by the Prophet, *They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters*, just as the Saint-worshippers in the Church of Rome forsake God, when in their private devotions the Vulgar think only of their tutelary Saints.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvi. ver. 30, 31, 32.

The several principal parts, therefore, of the Israelitish idolatry were these,

1. Worshipping the true GOD under an image, such as the *golden Calves*, 1 KINGS xii. 28.

2. Worshipping him in Places forbidden, as in *Groves*, 2 KINGS xviii. 22. Is. xxxvi. 7.

3. And by idolatrous Rites, such as *cutting themselves with knives*, JER. xli. 5.

4. By profaning the house of GOD with *idolatrous images*, JER. xxxii. 34.

5. By worshipping the true GOD and Idols together.

6. And lastly, by worshipping *idols alone*, JER. ii. 13. Yet by what follows, ver. 35. it appears, that even this was not a total apostacy from God.

If the Reader would know what use I intend to make of this account of the Jewish idolatry, to the main Question of my Work, I must crave his patience till we come to the last Volume. If he would know what other use may be made of it, he may consider what hath been said above; and be farther pleased to observe, that it obviates the objection of a sort of men equally unskilled in sacred and profane Antiquity; (of whom more by and by) who, from this circumstance of the perpetual defection of the Jews into idolatry, would conclude that the Dispensation of GOD to them could never have been so illustrious as their history hath represented it. The strength of which objection rests on these two suppositions, that their idolatry consisted

consisted in renouncing the Law of Moses : And renouncing it as dissatisfied of its truth. Both which suppositions we have shewn to be false : the neglect of the law, during their most idolatrous practice, being no other than their preferring impure novel Rites (which most strongly engage the attention of a superstitious people) to old ones, whose sanctity has no carnal allurements. As to its original from God, they never entertained the least doubt concerning it; or that the God of Israel was the Creator of the Universe : They had been better instructed. — *Thus saith the Lord*, the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL and HIS MAKER <sup>k</sup>. — As much as to say, the tutelary God of Israel is the Creator of the Universe: Indeed, in the period just preceding their Captivity, when the *extraordinary* providence was gradually withdrawing from them (a matter to be considered hereafter more at large) they began to entertain suspicions of God's farther regard to them, *as his chosen people*. But that nothing of this ever contributed to their idolatry is plain from what we have shewn above, of its being a wanton defection in the midst of peace, prosperity, and abundance, (the confessed effects of the *extraordinary* providence of the God of Israel) and of their constantly returning to him in times of difficulty and distress.

It is true, that this state of the case, which removes the infidel objection, at the same time discovers a most enormous perversity in that People; who, although convinced of the truth of a Religion forbidding all *intercommunity*, was forever running astray after foreign Worship. However, would we but transport ourselves into these times, and remember what hath been said of that great principle

<sup>k</sup> ISAIAH XLV. II.



of INTERCOMMUNITY OF WORSHIP; and how early and deeply the Jews had imbibed all the essential superstitions of Paganism, we should not only abate of our wonder, but see good cause to make large allowances to this unhappy People.

But there is another circumstance in this affair too remarkable to be passed by in silence. As fond as the Jews were of borrowing their Neighbours' Gods, we do not find, by any hints in ancient history, either profane or sacred, that their Neighbours were disposed to borrow theirs. Nay, we are assured, by Holy Writ, that they did not. God, by the Prophet Ezekiel, addressing himself to the Jews, speaks on this wise:—*And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy WHOREDOMS, WHEREAS NONE FOLLOWETH THEE TO COMMIT WHOREDOMS: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given to thee; therefore thou art contrary*<sup>1</sup>. I have shewn, elsewhere, that, by this, is meant, that no Gentile nation borrowed the Jewish Rites of Worship, to join them to their own. For as to Profelytes, or particular men converted to the service of the true God, we find a prodigious number in the Days of David and Solomon<sup>m</sup>. So again, in the Prophet Jeremiah, HATH A NATION CHANGED THEIR GODS, WHICH ARE YET NO GODS? *But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit*<sup>n</sup>; i. e. Hath any of the Nations brought in the God of Israel into the number of their false Gods, as the Israelites have brought in theirs to stand in fellowship with the true? For that the Nations frequently changed their tutelary Gods, or one idol for another, is too notorious to need any proof.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvi. ver. 34.

<sup>m</sup> 2 CHRON. ii. 17.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 11.

This then is remarkable. The two principal reasons of the contrariety, I suppose, were these:

1. It was a thing well known to all the neighbouring Nations, that the God of Israel had an abhorrence of all *community* or alliance with the Gods of the Gentiles. This unfociable temper would deter those people (who all held him as a tutelary Deity of great power) from ever bringing him into the fellowship of their country Gods. For, after such declarations, they could not suppose his company would prove very propitious. And in truth, they had a single instance of his ill neighbourhood, much to their cost; which brings me to the second reason.

2. The devastation he brought upon the Philistines, while the ARK rested in their quarters. For they having taken it from the Israelites in battle, carried it, as another *Palladium*°, to Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of their God Dagon; who passed two so bad nights with his new Guest, that on the second morning he was found pared

° For this was the only use the Pagans ever thought of making of the Gods of their enemies when they had stolen them, or taken them away by force. Apion had mentioned one Zabidus an Idumean, who, when the Jews were warring against his countrymen, made a bargain with the enemy to deliver Apollo, one of their tutelary Gods, into their hands: and Josephus, when he comes to confute this idle tale, takes it for granted that the only supposed cause of such pretended traffic was to gain a new tutelary Deity; and on this, founds his argument against Apion: *How then, says he, can Apion persist in accusing us of not having Gods in common with others, when our forefathers were so easily persuaded to believe that Apollo was coming into their service? Τί δ' ἡμῶν ἔτι καλίστου τὸ μὴ κοινὸς ἔχει τοῖς ἄλλοις θεῷς, εἰ ῥαδίως ἔτυχεν ἐπιστῆναι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, ἔπειτα τὸ Ἀπόλλωνα πρὸς αὐτούς.* Vol. ii. p. 478.

away

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away to his *fishy stump*<sup>p</sup>: And this disaster was followed with a desolating pestilence. The people of Ashdod, who hitherto had intended to keep the Ark as one of their Idol-protectors, now declare *it should not abide with them, for that the hand of the GOD OF ISRAEL was sore upon them, and upon Dagon their God*<sup>1</sup>. They sent it therefore to Gath, another of their cities; and these having carried it about in a religious procession, it made the same havock amongst them<sup>2</sup>. It was then removed a third time, with an intent to send it to Ekron; but the men of that city, terrified with the two preceding calamities, refused to receive it, saying *they had brought the Ark of the God of Israel, to slay them and their people*<sup>3</sup>. At length the Philistines by sad experience, were brought to understand, that it was the best course to send it back to its owners; which they did with great honour; with gifts and trespass-offerings, to appease the offended Divinity<sup>4</sup>. And from this time we hear no more of any attempts amongst the gentile Nations to join the Jewish Worship to their own. They considered the God of Israel as a tutelary Deity, absolutely UN-SOCIABLE; who would have nothing to do with any but his own People, or with such Particulars as would worship him alone; and therefore, in this respect, different from all other tutelary Gods; each of which was willing to live in community with all the rest. This, the historian Josephus understood to be their sentiment, when he makes the Midianitish women address the young men of Israel in the following manner: *Nor ought you to be blamed for honouring those Gods which belong to the*

<sup>p</sup> 1 SAM. v. 4, 5.  
<sup>2</sup> Ver. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 7.  
<sup>4</sup> Chap. vi. ver. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 9.



*Country where you sojourn*<sup>\*</sup>. Besides, our Gods are COMMON TO ALL THE NATIONS, yours to NONE OF THEM<sup>†</sup>.

And thus the matter rested, till occasion requiring that God should vindicate his property in that Country which he had chosen for his peculiar residence, as a tutelary Deity. He then drove the Pagan inhabitants of Samaria into his worship, just as he had driven the Philistines from it: and, in both cases, hath afforded to his servants the most illustrious proofs of divine wisdom, in his manner of conducting this wonderful Œconomy to its completion.

But from this circumstance of the inability of the Law to prevent the Israelites from falling thus frequently into idolatry, a noble Writer<sup>\*</sup> has thought fit to ground a charge of imposture against the Lawgiver. It would therefore look like prevarication to let so fair an opportunity, pass by without vindicating the Truth from his misrepresentations; especially when the nature and causes of that idolatry, as here explained, tend so directly to expose all his pompous sophistry.

“ One of the most conceivable perfections of a law is, (says his Lordship) that it be made with such a foresight of all possible accidents, and

<sup>\*</sup> See what hath been said above concerning this imaginary obligation.

<sup>†</sup> Μέμνηται δ' ἡδὲς, εἰ γῆς εἰς ἣν ἀφίχθε τὰς ἰδίους αὐτῆς Θεὸς προσέποιεσθαι καὶ ταῦτα. τῶν μὲν ἡμετέρων κοινῶν ὅλων πρὸς ἀπάλλας, τῷ δ' ὑμῖν πρὸς μηδέναι τούτων τυχεῖσθαι. *Antiq. Jud.* l. iv. c. 6. Sect. 8.

<sup>\*</sup> Lord Bolingbroke.

“ with

“ with such provisions for the due execution of it  
 “ in all cases, that the law may be effectual to  
 “ govern and direct these accidents, instead of  
 “ lying at the mercy of them. Such a law would  
 “ produce its effect, by a certain moral necessity  
 “ resulting from itself, and not by the help of  
 “ any particular conjuncture. We are able to  
 “ form some general notions of laws thus perfect;  
 “ but to make them, is above humanity.  
 “ ———To apply these reflections to the Law of  
 “ Moses—We cannot read the Bible without being  
 “ convinced, that no law ever operated so  
 “ weak and uncertain an effect as the Law of  
 “ Moses did. Far from prevailing against accidents  
 “ and conjunctures, the least was sufficient  
 “ to interrupt the course and to defeat the designs  
 “ of it; to make that people not only neglect  
 “ the Law, but cease to acknowledge the Legislator.  
 “ To prevent this, was the first of these  
 “ designs; and if the second was, as it was, no  
 “ doubt, and as it is the design or pretence of all  
 “ laws, to secure the happiness of the people,  
 “ THIS DESIGN WAS DEFEATED AS FULLY AS  
 “ THE OTHER; for the whole history of this  
 “ people is one continued series of infractions of  
 “ the Law, and of national calamities. So that  
 “ this law, considered as the particular law of this  
 “ nation, has proved more ineffectual than any  
 “ other law perhaps that can be quoted. If this  
 “ be ascribed to the hardness of heart and obstinacy  
 “ of the people, in order to save the honour of  
 “ the Law, this honour will be little saved,  
 “ and its divinity ill maintained. This excuse  
 “ may be admitted in the case of any human law;  
 “ but we speak here of a law supposed to be  
 “ dictated by divine Wisdom, which ought, and  
 “ which would have been able, if it had been,  
 “ such,

“such, to keep, in a state of submission to it,  
 “and of national prosperity, even a people re-  
 “bellious and obstinate enough to break through  
 “any other. If it be said the Law became inef-  
 “fectual by the fault of those who governed the  
 “people, their Judges and their Kings, let it be  
 “remembered that their Judges and their Kings  
 “were of God’s appointment, for the most part  
 “at least; that he himself is said to have been  
 “their King during several ages; that his pre-  
 “sence remained amongst them, even after they  
 “had deposed him; and that the High Priest  
 “consulted him, on any emergency, by the Urim  
 “and Thummim. Occasional miracles were  
 “wrought to enforce the Law, but this was a  
 “standing miracle that might serve both to explain  
 “and enforce it, by the wisdom and authority of  
 “the Legislator, as often as immediate recourse  
 “to him was necessary. Can it be denied that  
 “the most imperfect system of human laws would  
 “have been rendered effectual by such means as  
 “these?”

I. The sum of his Lordship’s reasoning amounts to this, “That the Jewish Law being ordained for a certain end, it betrays its imposture by never being able to attain that end. For, first, if *infinite Wisdom* framed the Law, it must be most perfect; and it is essential to the perfection of a mean, for a Law is nothing but a mean, that it attain its end. Secondly, if *infinite Power* administered it, that Power must have rendered even the most imperfect system effectual to its purpose.”

<sup>a</sup> Lord Bolingbroke’s Works, vol. iii. p. 292, 293, 294. Quarto Edition.

Thus,



Thus, we see, his Argument, when reduced to order, divides itself into these two branches; Considerations drawn, first, from the *Wisdom*, and, then, from the *Power* of the Deity, to discredit his workmanship.

1. We will take him at his best, with the improvement of order; and first examine his conclusions from the circumstance of *infinite Wisdom's framing the Law*.

Let us admit then for a moment, that his representation of the *end* of the Law is exact; and that his assertion of its never gaining its end, is true: I answer, that this objection to the divine original of the JEWISH LAW holds equally against the divine original of that Law of Nature, called the MORAL LAW. Now his Lordship pretends to believe that the *Moral Law* came from God: nay, that He was so entirely the Author and Creator of it, that if he had so pleased, he might have made it essentially different from what it is. But yet the experience of all ages hath shewn, that this Law prevailed still less against accidents and conjunctures than the Mosaic. For if the Jews were always transgressing their Law till the Captivity, yet after that disaster they as scrupulously adhered to it; and in that attachment have continued ever since: whereas, from the day the MORAL LAW was first given to mankind, to this present hour, *the least accident was sufficient to interrupt the course, and to defeat the designs of it*. How happened it therefore, that this acknowledged Law of God did not govern and direct accidents, instead of lying at the mercy of them? Was it less perfect in its kind than the Mosaic? Who will pretend to say That, who believes the Moral Law came directly from God, and was de-

livered intimately to Man, for the service of the whole Species; while the Jewish Law came less directly from him, as being conveyed thro' the ministry of Moses, for the sole use of the Jewish People?

To these questions his Lordship would be ready to answer, "That it is necessary for the subjects of a moral law to be endowed with free Will: That free Will may be abused; and that such abuses may render the most *perfect* system of Laws ineffectual." But this answer turns upon his Lordship, when applied to the defence of the Mosaic Law; and turns with redoubled force.

We see then how much he was mistaken in concluding, that, because *perfection in its kind* is one of the essential qualities of a divine Law, therefore such a law must of *necessity* produce its effect. His best reason for this fancy is, that *he is able to form some general notions of Laws thus perfect*. Which is no more than telling us, (notwithstanding his parade of insinuated ability) that he is able to conceive how the Will may be controlled, and how Man may be transformed into a Machine. It is true, he owns, that this fact, viz. *to make laws thus perfect, is above humanity*. It is so; and let me add, as much *below the Divinity*; whose glory it is to draw his reasonable creatures with the *cords of a man*. A Law then, which produces its effects by a *certain necessity*, must do it by a necessity which is *physical*, and not *moral*; it being the quality of *physical*, not of *moral necessity*, that its effects cannot possibly be defeated.

Thus, we see, all there is of truth in his Lordship's assertion, of its being *essential to the perfection of a mean that it attain its end*, amounts only to this,



this, A capacity in such a *mean* to attain its end, naturally and of itself. And this, we say, was the condition of the Mosaic Law; whatever might be the actual success.

The qualities of a Law capable of producing its effect, are to be sought for *à priori*, as the Schools speak, and not *à posteriori*: And if here we find intrinsic marks of excellence in the particular Laws; of consummate wisdom in the general Frame and Constitution of them; and can likewise discover those *accidents*, which, at some periods of the Dispensation, hindred the *effect*; we have done all that human reason can require, to vindicate this divine Law, from his Lordship's imputations of imposture.

To treat this matter as it deserves, would require a volume, tho' not so large as his Lordship's. But a few words will suffice to give the reader a general idea of the truth. And a general idea will be sufficient to shew the futility of the objection.

The admirable provision made by the Jewish Law for preventing idolatry, may be seen in the following instances.

1. That each specific Rite had a natural tendency to oppose, or to elude, the strong propensity to idolatrous Worship, by turning certain Pagan observances, with which the People were besotted, upon a proper Object.—Hence that CONFORMITY between Jewish and Pagan Ceremonies, which so vainly alarms, and so vainly flatters, both the friends and enemies of Revelation.

2. That by their multiplicity, and the frequent returns of their celebration, they kept the People



constantly busied and employed; so as to afford small time or leisure for the running into the forbidden superstitions of Paganism.

3. That the immediate benefits which followed the punctual observance of the Law had a natural tendency to keep them attached to it.

4. But lastly, and above all, that the admirable coincidence between the *Institute of Law* and the *Administration of Government*, (whereby the Magistrate was enabled to punish idolatry with death, without violating the rights of Mankind) went as far towards the actual prevention of idolatrous Worship, as, according to human conceptions, CIVIL LAW, whether of human or divine original, could possibly go. And resting the matter here, I suppose, one might safely defy his Lordship, with all his legislative talents, and his vain boast of them, *to form any general notions of a law more perfect.*

But this reasoning on the natural efficacy of the Mosaic Law, by its innate virtue, to prevent and to restrain Idolatry, which it did not at all times, in fact, prevent and restrain, will be further supported by this consideration: That the circumstance which, from time to time, occasioned a defection from the Law, was neither an indisposition to its establishment; nor any incoherence in its general Frame and Constitution; nor aversion to any particular part, nor yet a debility or weakness in its Sanctions. The sole cause of the defection was an inveterate prejudice, exterior and foreign to the Law. The Israelites, in their house of bondage, had been brought up in the principles of LOCAL AND TUTELAR DEITIES and INTERCOMMUNITY OF WORSHIP; principles often referred to, on various occasions,

occasions, in the course of this work, for the illustration of the most important truths. In these Principles, they saw the whole race of mankind agree : and, from the Practice of them, in the worship of tutelar Deities, they thought they saw a world of good ready to arise. But not only the hope of good, but the fear of evil drew them still more strongly into this road of folly. Their Egyptian education had early impressed that bugbear-notion of a set of *local* Deities, who expected their dues of all who came to inhabit the country which they had honoured with their protection<sup>b</sup>; and severely resented the neglect of payment, on all new comers. This will easily account for the frequent defections of the Israelities in the divided service of the Gods of Canaan.—But it is difficult for men fixed down to the impressions of modern manners, to let themselves into distant Times; or to feel the force of motives whose operations they have never experienced: Therefore, to convince such men that the early Jewish defections were not owing to any want of force or virtue in the Law, but to the exterior violence of an universal prejudice, it may be proper to observe, that, from the Babylonian Captivity to this very time, the Jews have been as averse to Idolatry under every form and fashion of it, as before they were propense unto it. If it be asked, what it was that occasioned so mighty a change? I answer, It was in part, the severity of that punishment which they had felt; and in part, the abatement of that foolish prejudice which they had favoured, of INTERCOMMUNITY OF WORSHIP: This, tho' still as general as ever in the Pagan world, had yet lost greatly of its force amongst the Jews, since they became

<sup>b</sup> See what has been said on this matter just above, in the case of the *Cutheans*, inhabiting Samaria.

acquainted with the principles of Gentile Philosophy; the founder parts of which being found conformable to the *reasonable* doctrines of their Religion, were applied by them to the use of explaining the Law. An use which this Philosophy was never put to in the place of its birth, on account of the *absurdities* of Pagan Worship; for this kept the principles of Philosophy and the practices of Religion at too great a distance to have any influence on one another. Such was the advantage the followers of the Jewish Law reaped from the Greek Philosophy; an advantage peculiar to them; and which made some amends for the many superstitions of another kind, which the mixing Philosophy with Religion introduced into the practice of the Law: superstitions which depraved, and at length totally destroyed the noble simplicity of its nature and genius. — But I anticipate a subject for which I shall find a much fitter place.

At length then we see, that the Law of Moses was, indeed, such a one as his Lordship would require in a LAW OF DIVINE ORIGINAL, namely, that *it produced its effect*, if not by a *physical* necessity which bears down all obstruction before it, yet by a *moral*, which constantly kept operating when no foreign impediment stood in the way! So false is his Lordship's assertions, that *the whole history of this people is one continued series of infractions of the Law*. If, by the *whole*, he means (as his argument requires he should mean) the whole both of their sacred and merely civil history; and, by *one continued series of infractions of the Law*, their lapses into Idolatry; it is the grossest misrepresentation: the far greater part of their duration as a distinct People was free from idolatry; and an authentic account of this freedom is recorded in their  
Annals.



Annals. But if by *their whole history*, he means (as his cause might necessitate him to mean) only the sacred books; and, by *their infraction of the Law*, only transgressions in lesser matters, it is illusory and impertinent.

2. We have seen the force of his Lordship's conclusion from the circumstance—*of infinite Wisdom's framing the Law*: We come next to the other circumstance, from which he deduceth the same conclusion, namely *infinite Power's administering the Law*.

“ Let it be remembered (says his Lordship)  
 “ that God himself is said to have been their King  
 “ during several ages; that his presence remained  
 “ amongst them, even after they had deposed  
 “ him; and that the High Priest consulted him, on  
 “ any emergency, by the Urim and Thummim.  
 “ OCCASIONAL MIRACLES were wrought to inforce  
 “ the Law, but this was a standing miracle that  
 “ might serve both to explain and inforce it, by  
 “ the wisdom and authority of the Legislator, as  
 “ often as immediate recourse to him was necessary.  
 “ *Can it be denied that the most imperfect system of hu-*  
 “ *man Laws would have been rendered effectual by such*  
 “ *means as these ?* ”

This bad reasoning seems to be urged with much good faith, contrary to his Lordship's usual custom; and arises from his ignorance of a *Theocratic* administration, as the nature of the administration may be collected from the common principles of the Law of Nature and Nations.

Let us consider the affair dispassionately. God, in giving laws to his chosen people, was pleased,

*more humano*, to assume the title King, and to administer their civil affairs by a *Theocratic* mode of Government. Every step in this establishment evinces, that it was his purpose to interfere no otherwise than in conformity to that political assumption. He proceeded on the most equitable grounds of civil Government: he became their *King* by free choice. It must needs therefore be his purpose to confine himself to such *powers of legislation*, as human Governors are able to exert; tho' he extended the *powers of administration* far beyond the limits of humanity. His Lordship's ignorance of so reasonable a distinction occasioned all this pompous Fallacy. He found in the Mosaic Dispensation OCCASIONAL MIRACLES pretended: and he imagined that, consistently with this pretence, *Miracles* ought to operate throughout, rather than that the *end* of the Law should be defeated. But, I presume, God could not, conformably to his purpose of erecting a THEOCRACY, and administering it *MORE HUMANO*, exert miraculous powers in *legislating*, though he very well might, and actually did exert them, in *governing*: because, in legislation, a *miracle*, that is, a supernatural force added to the Laws, to make them constantly obeyed, could not be employed without putting a force upon the Will; by which God's Laws would indeed *produce their effect*, but it would be by the destruction of the subject of them. The case was different in administering the Laws made: here God was to act *miraculously*; often out of wise choice, to manifest the nature of the Government, and the reality of his *regal* character; sometimes out of necessity, for the carrying on of that Government on the Sanctions by which it was to be dispensed: and all this he might do without the least force upon the Will.

This



This is sufficient to expose the futility of his Lordship's conclusion from the circumstance of *infinite Power's administering the Law*; it being essential to the Law, that *infinite Power administering it*, should restrain itself within such bounds as left the Will perfectly free. But *infinite Power*, restrained within such bounds, might sometimes meet with unsurmountable obstructions in the course of its direction, under a Theocracy administered *more humano*.

II. We have seen how weak his Lordship's reasoning is in itself: Let us now see how much weaker he makes it by ill management; till at length it comes out a good argument against his own objection.

“ The Law of Moses (says his Lordship) was  
 “ so far from prevailing over accidents and conjunc-  
 “ tures, that the least was sufficient to interrupt the  
 “ course and defeat the design of it, to make that  
 “ people not only neglect the Law, BUT CEASE  
 “ TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGISLATOR. To pre-  
 “ vent this was the *first of these designs*: and if the  
 “ *second* was (as it was, no doubt) and as it is the  
 “ design or pretence of all Laws, to secure the  
 “ happiness of the people, THIS DESIGN WAS DE-  
 “ FEATED AS FULLY AS THE OTHER: for the whole  
 “ history of this people is one continued series of  
 “ INFRACTIONS OF THE LAW, AND OF NATIONAL  
 “ CALAMITIES.”

To pass by that vulgar mistake (which has been sufficiently exposed above) that the Jews *ever ceased to acknowledge their Legislator*; let me observe it to his Lordship's credit, that he appears to have understood so much at least of the Mosaic Institution,



as to see that the *first end* of it was peculiar to itself, and that that which is common to all civil Communities was but the *second end* of This.

But is it not strange, when he saw so far into the nature of the Jewish Constitution, that he should not see that this *second end* was entirely dependent on what he himself makes the principal; namely, to preserve the Israelites from idolatry; but should argue against the divinity of the Law, as if these ends were independant one of another, and that one might be obtained without the other. For, to aggravate the imbecillity of the Law, he informs us in the passage last quoted, “ that it was not only unable to gain its first end, but its second likewise: *that the one design was defeated as fully as the other*; that the people were not only idolaters in spiritual matters, but poor, miserable, and calamitous in their civil interests.” Strange! that he could not see, or would not acknowledge, that the LAW denounces their happiness and misery as citizens, in exact proportion to their adherence to, or their defection from, that Law; when he saw and confessed, (what their HISTORY records) that this was their invariable fortune. *The whole history of this people* (says his Lordship) *is one continued series of infractions of the Law, and of national calamities*. Now if the whole frame of the Mosaic Law was so composed, as to do that by *positive* institute which the Moral Law does by *natural*, viz. reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient, (and it certainly was so composed, if a *continued series of infractions* was followed by a *continued series of calamities*) we must needs conclude that we have here the strongest proof of that divine Wisdom in the Constitution, which this great modern Law-giver pretends to seek, but assures us he is not able  
to

to find; and yet, at the same time, brings this convincing circumstance of the *truth* of the LAW; but brings it indeed as an argument of its *falsehood*. — *This design* (says he) *was defeated as fully as the other*. Here his rhetoric, as usual, got the better of his reasoning: Not content to say, — *the whole history of this People is one continued series of infractions of the Law*, — he will needs add by way of exaggeration — AND OF NATIONAL CALAMITIES. Which has so perverse an influence on the argument as to undo all he had been labouring to bring about, by discovering a connexion between *infractions* and *calamities*, which has all the marks of a divine contrivance.

Had it been the declared design of their Law-giver to *separate* the two ends, and to form such an Economy as that the People under it might be flourishing in Peace and affluence, while they were Idolaters in Religion; or, on the other hand, true Worshipers and, at the same time, calamitous Citizens; then to find them neither religious nor prosperous, under a Law which pretended to procure truth without temporal felicity, or to establish peace and prosperity in the midst of error; this indeed (without taking in the perversity of such a System) would have fully discredited the pretended original. But when, in this Law, truth and happiness, error and misery, are declared to have an inseparable connexion; the freethinking Politician, who shews from history that this connexion was constant and invariable, is intrapped by the retorsion of nature and reason, to prove against himself the Divinity of that Institute he labours to discredit.

Other: When, on reading the history of ordinary People, we find (as Josephus well

well expresses it) that, *in proportion to the neglect of the Law, easy things became unsurmountable, and all their undertakings, how just soever, ended in incurable calamities*<sup>c</sup>; we cannot but acknowledge the divine direction in every stage of such a Dispensation. For, to comprehend the whole of the Historian's meaning, we must remember, that there were some Laws given purposely to manifest the divinity of their original: such as that *against multiplying horses*; which, when it was transgressed, *easy things became unsurmountable*; and that which most facilitates a victory, a strong body of Cavalry intermixed with Foot, proved amongst the Israelites, a certain means of their defeat. So again, when they transgressed the Law which commanded *all the males to go annually to the temple*, the historian tells us, *their most just undertakings ended in incurable calamities*; and sure nothing could be more just than to defend their borders from invaders; yet they were sure to be most infested with them when they thought themselves best secured: that is, while there males were at home, when they should have been worshipping at the Temple.

III. But it is now time to come a little closer to his Lordship. He has been all along arguing on a FALSE FACT, which his ignorance of the nature of the Jewish Separation hindered him from seeing.

He understood, indeed, that this extraordinary Economy had, for its *primary end*, something very different from all other civil Policies; and that that

<sup>c</sup> καθ' ὅσον δ' ἂν ἀπογῶσι τῆς τῶτων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμελείας, ἀπορὰ μὲν γίνεσθαι τὰ πόρρω, τρεπεται δ' εἰς συμφορὰς ἀνηκίς; ὅ, τὸ πὺρ ἀν εἰς ἀγαθὸν ὄραν σπυδασωσιν. Antiq. v. i. p. 4.

which



which was the first, (indeed the only end) in others, was but the secondary, end in this. Yet this primary end he saw so obscurely, as not to be able to make it out. He supposed it was *to keep the Israelites from idolatry*; whereas it was TO PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF THE ONE GOD IN AN IDOLATROUS WORLD, till the coming of Christ: To *keep the Israelites from idolatry*, was but the *mean* to this end. Thus has our political Architect “mistaken the “scaffold for the pile,” as his harmonious friend expresses it. And the mistake is the more gross, as the notion of the ultimate end’s being to *keep the Israelites from idolatry*, is founded in that vain fancy of Jewish pride, that their Fathers were selected as the favorites of God, out of his fondness for the race of Abraham.

Under this rectified idea therefore let us consider the truth of his Lordship’s assertion, *That no Law ever operated so weak and uncertain an effect as the Law of Moses did: far from prevailing against accidents and conjunctures, the least was sufficient to interrupt the course, and to defeat the designs of it.*

Now if we keep the true end of the Law in view, we shall see, on the contrary, that it prevailed constantly and uniformly, without the least interruption, against the most violent *accidents*, and in the most unfavourable *conjunctures*; those I mean, which happened when their propensity to the practice of idolatry, and their prejudice for the *principle of intercommunity* were at the height: for amidst all the disorders consequent thereto, they still preserved the knowledge of the true God, and performed the Rites ordained by the Law. And the very calamities which followed the infraction of the

Law, of which the neighbouring Nations occasionally partook, were sufficient to alarm these latter, when most at ease, amidst the imaginary protection of their tutelary Gods, and to awaken them to the awful sense of a BEING different, as well as superior to their *National Protectors*. Which shews, that the Law still *operated its effect*, strongly and constantly; and still *prevailed against accidents and conjunctures*, which it *governed and directed*, instead of *lying at the mercy of them*. But as it is very probable that the frequent transgressions, which those *accidents and conjunctures* occasioned, would in time have defeated the end of the Law, the transgressors were punished by a seventy-years-captivity; the extraordinary circumstances of which, made such an impression on their haughty masters as brought them to confess that the *God of Israel* was the *true God*; and was so severely felt by them, that they had an utter aversion and abhorrence of Idolatry or the worship of false Gods, ever after. So that from thence to the coming of Christ, a course of many ages, they adhered, tho' tributary and persecuted, and (what has still greater force than Persecution, if not thoroughly administered) despised and ridiculed by the two greatest Empires of the world, the Greek and Roman; and tho' surrounded with the pomp and splendour of Pagan idolatries, recommended by the fashion of Courts, and the plausible glosses of Philosophers, they adhered, I say strictly, and even superstitiously to the letter of that Law, which allowed of no other Gods besides the God of Israel. Now if this was not *gaining its end*, we must seek for other modes of speech, and other conceptions of things, when we reason upon Government and Laws.

Yet this was not all. For the Law not only gained its end, in delivering down the Religion of  
the



the TRUE GOD into the hands of the REDEEMER OF MANKIND; who soon spread it throughout the whole Roman Empire; but even after it had done its destined work, the vigour of the Mosaic Revelation still working at the root, enabled a bold Impostor to extend the principle of the UNITY still wider, till it had embraced the remotest regions of the habitable World: So that, at this day, almost all the Natives of the vast regions of higher Asia, whether Gentiles, Christians, or Mahometans, are the professed worshippers of the ONE ONLY GOD. How much the extension of the principle of the *Unity* has been owing to this Cause, under the permission and direction of that Providence, which is ever producing *good out of evil*, is known to all who are acquainted with the present state of the Eastern World.

The reason why I ascribe so much of this good, to the lasting efficacy of the Mosaic Law, is this; Mahomet was born and brought up an Idolater, and inhabited an idolatrous Country; so that had he seen no more of true Religion than in the superstitious practice of the Greek Church, at that time over-run with saint and image-worship, it is odds but that, when he set up for a Prophet, he might have made Idolatry the basis of his new Religion: But getting acquainted with the Jews and their Scriptures, he came to understand the folly of Gentilism and the corruptions of Christianity; and by this means was enabled to preach up the doctrine of the ONE GOD, in its purity and integrity. It is again remarkable, that to guard and secure this doctrine, which He made the fundamental principle of Ishmaelitism, he brought into his Imposture many of those provisions which Moses had put in practice to prevent the contagion of idolatry.

But



But the great Man with whom we have to do, is so secure of his fact, namely that *the Law was perpetually defeated, and never gained its end*, that he supposes his Adversaries, the DIVINES, are ready to confess it; and will only endeavour to elude his inference by throwing the ill success of its operations on the *hardness of the People's hearts and the impiety of their Governors*<sup>d</sup>. And this affords him fresh occasion of triumph.

I will not be positive that this species of Divines is intirely of his own invention, and that this their apology for Moses is altogether as imaginary as their famous CONFEDERACY<sup>e</sup> against God; because I know by experience that there are of these Divines, who, in support of their passions and prejudices, are always ready (as I have amply experienced) to admit what Scripture opposes, and to oppose what it admits, in almost every page. But the best Apologies of such men are never worth a defence, and indeed are rarely capable of any.

To conclude: Such as these here exposed, are all the reasonings of his Lordship's bulky volumes: And no wonder; when a writer, however able in other matters, will needs dictate in a Science of which he did not possess so much as the first Principles.

### S E C T. III.

**H**AVING thus shewn the nature of this THEOCRACY, and the attendant circumstances of its erection; our next enquiry will be concerning its DURATION,

<sup>d</sup> Page 293—4.

<sup>e</sup> Vol. v. p. 303—307—393.

Most writers suppose it to have ended with the JUDGES; but scarce any bring it lower than the CAPTIVITY. On the contrary, I hold that, in strict truth and propriety, it ended not 'till the coming of CHRIST.

I. That it ended not with the Judges appears evident for these reasons:

1. Tho' indeed the People's purpose, in their clamours for a King, was to live under a gentile Monarchy like their idolatrous neighbours; (for so it is represented by God himself, in his reproof of their impiety<sup>f</sup>) yet in compassion to their blindness, he, in this instance, as in many others, indulged their prejudices, without exposing them to the fatal consequence of their project: which, if complied with, in the sense they formed it, had been the withdrawing of his *extraordinary protection* from them, at a time when they could not support themselves without it. He therefore gave them a King; but such an one as was only his VICEROY or Deputy; and who, on that account, was not left to the People's election, as he left his own Regality; but was chosen by himself: the only difference between God's appointment of the Judges and of Saul being this, that They were chosen by internal impulse; He, by Lots, or external designation.

2. This king had an unlimited *executive* power; as God's Viceroy must needs have.

3. He had no *legislative* power: which a Viceroy could not possibly have.

<sup>f</sup> 1 SAM. viii. 7.

4. He was placed and displaced by God at pleasure: of which, as Viceroy, we see the perfect fitness; but as Sovereign by the people's choice, one cannot easily account for; because God did not chuse to supersede the natural Rights of his People, as appears by his leaving it, at first, to their own option whether they would have God himself for their King.

5. The very same punishment was ordained for cursing the King as for blaspheming God, namely, stoning to death; and the reason is intimated in these words of Abishai to David, *Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S ANOINTED*<sup>e</sup>? This was the common title of the Kings of Israel and Judah, and plainly denoted their office of Vicereignty: Improperly, and superstitiously transferred, in these latter ages, to christian Kings and Princes.

From this further circumstance, a *Vicereignty* is necessarily inferred: The throne and kingdom of Judea is all along expressly declared to be God's throne and God's kingdom. Thus, in the first book of Chronicles, it is said that *Solomon sat on the THRONE OF THE LORD, as King, instead of David his father*<sup>h</sup>. And the queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon, to be instructed in his wisdom, and doubtless had been informed by him of the true nature of his kingdom, compliments him in these words: *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on HIS THRONE, TO BE KING FOR THE LORD THY GOD*<sup>i</sup>. In like manner Abijah speaks to the house of Israel, on their

<sup>e</sup> 2 SAM. xix. 21.  
ix. 8.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. xxix. ver. 23.

<sup>i</sup> 2 CHRON.



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defection from Rehoboam: *And now ye think to withstand the KINGDOM OF THE LORD in the hands of the sons of David*<sup>k</sup>. And to the same purpose, Nehemiah: *Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments, and thy testimonies wherewith thou didst testify against them. For they have not served thee in THEIR KINGDOM*<sup>l</sup>. The sense, I think, requires that the Septuagint reading should be here preferred, which says ΕΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ ΣΟΥ, IN THY KINGDOM. And this the Syriac and Arabic versions follow. As Judea is always called *his kingdom*, so he is always called the *King of the Jews*. Thus the Palmist: *Thine Altars, O Lord of Hosts, my KING and my God*<sup>m</sup>. And again: *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their KING*<sup>n</sup>. And thus the Prophet Jeremiah: *The KING, whose name is the Lord of Hosts*<sup>o</sup>.

7. The penal Laws against idolatry were still in force during their Kings; and put in execution by their best rulers, and even by men inspired. Which, alone, is a demonstration of the subsistence of the THEOCRACY; because such laws are absolutely unjust under every other form of Government.

As to the title of *King* given to these Rulers, this will have small weight with those who reflect that Moses likewise, who was surely no more than God's deputy, is called King: *Moses commanded us a Law; even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was KING in Jeshurun, when*

<sup>k</sup> 2 CHRON. xiii. 8.  
lxxxiv. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. ix, ver. 35.

<sup>m</sup> PSALM cxlix. 2,

<sup>n</sup> PSALM  
<sup>o</sup> JER. li. 57.

*the heads of the people, and the tribes of Israel were gathered together*<sup>p</sup>.

Let us now see what the celebrated M. Le Clerc says in defense of the contrary opinion, which supposeth the THEOCRACY to have ended with the Judges. Father Simon of the Oratory had said, that *the republic of the Hebrews never acknowledged any other CHIEF than God alone, who continued to govern in that quality, even during the time in which it was subject to Kings*<sup>q</sup>. This was enough to make his learned adversary take the other side of the question; who being piqued at Simon's contemptuous slight of his offered assistance, in the project for a new Polyglott, revenged himself upon him in those licentious <sup>r</sup> Letters, intitled, *Sentimens de quelques Theologiens de Hollande*, where his only business is to pick a quarrel. He therefore maintains against Simon, *That the Theocracy ceased on establishing the throne in the race of David*<sup>s</sup>. What

he

<sup>p</sup> DEUT. xxxiii. 4 and 5.

<sup>q</sup> La Republique des Hebreux differre en cela de tous les autres états du monde, qu'elle n'a jamais reconnu pour chef que Dieu seul, qui a continué de la gouverner en cette qualité dans les tems mêmes qu'elle a été soumise à des rois. *Histoire Crit. de Vieux Test.* p. 15. Ed. Rotterd. 1685.

<sup>r</sup> I call them licentious, principally, for the extravagant Reasonings concerning the authority of the Pentateuch, and the divine inspiration of Scripture. The first he retracted and confuted, when the spirit of contradiction had given way to better principles; the other (which he had inserted into the *Letters* as the work of another man) he never, that I know of, attoned for, by any retraction whatsoever.

<sup>s</sup> Il paroît au contraire par l'Ecriture, que Dieu n'a gouverné la republique des Hebreux, en qualité de chef politique, que pendant qu'ils n'avoient point des rois, & peut-être au commencement

he hath of argument to support this opinion is but little; and may be summed up in the following observation, *That God did not PERSONALLY interfere with his directions, nor discharge the functions of a Magistrate after the establishment of the Kings as he had done before*<sup>t</sup>. But this, instead of proving the abolition of the *Theocracy*, only shews that it was administered by a *Viceroy*. For in what consists the office of a Viceroy but to discharge the functions of his Principal? He had been a cipher, had God still governed *immediately* as before. Mr. Le Clerc could see that God acted *by the ministry of the Judges*<sup>u</sup>. If then the Theocratic function could be discharged by deputation, why might it not be done by Kings as well as Judges? The difference, if any, is only from less to more, and from occasional to constant. No, says our Critic, the cession was in consequence of his own declaration to Samuel: *For they have not rejected thee, but they have REJECTED ME, that I should not reign over them*<sup>x</sup>. This only declares the sense God had of their murinous request; but does not at all imply

ment que les rois furent établis, avant que la famille de David fut affermie sur le trône d'Israël. *Sentimens, &c.* p. 78.

<sup>t</sup> — Pendant tout ce temps-là, Dieu fit les fonctions de roi, Il jugeoit des affaires — il répondoit par l'oracle — il regloit la marche de l'armée — il envoyoit même quelquefois un ange — On n'étoit obligé d'obéir aveuglement, qu'aux seuls ordres de Dieu. Mais lors qu'il y eut des rois en Israël, & que le royaume fut attaché à la famille de David, les rois furent maîtres absolus, & Dieu cessa de faire leurs fonctions. p. 78, 79.

<sup>u</sup> — au lieu qu'auparavant Dieu lui-même la faisoit, *par le ministère des Juges*, qu'il suscitoit de temps en temps au milieu d'Israël. *Def. des Sent.* p. 121.

<sup>x</sup> — C'est pour cela que Dieu dit à Samuel, lors qu'Israël voulut avoir un roi pour le juger à la manière de toutes les nations : *ce n'est pas toi qu'ils ont rejeté, mais moi, afin que je ne regne point sur eux*, 1 SAM. viii. 7.



that he gave way to it. For who, from the like words (which express so natural a resentment of an open defection) would infer in the case of any other monarch, that he thereupon stepped down from his throne, and suffered an usurper to seize his place? This, we see, was poor reasoning. But, luckily for his reputation, he had an Adversary who reasoned worse. — However Simon saw thus much into Le Clerc's cavil, as to reply, *That all he had said was quite beside the purpose, for that the thing to be proved was, that, after the establishment of the Kings, God was no longer the civil Chief*<sup>1</sup>. On which Le Clerc thus insults him: *As much as to say, that in order to prove God was no longer Chief of the Hebrews after the election of a King, it is beside the purpose to shew, he never afterwards discharged the functions of a Chief of the republic. It is thus this great Genius happily unravels matters, and discovers, in an instant, what is, and what is not to the purpose*<sup>2</sup>. Whether Simon indeed knew why Le Clerc's objection was nothing to the purpose, is to be left to God and his own conscience, for he gives us no reasons for the censure he passes on it: but that it was indeed nothing to the purpose, is most evident, if this proposition be true,

<sup>1</sup> Je passe sous silence le long discours de Mr. le Clerc touchant le pouvoir de Dieu sur les Israélites avant l'établissement des rois, d'où il prétend prouver que Dieu pendant tout ce temps-la fit la fonction de roi. Tout cela est hors de propos, puis qu'il s'agit de prouver qu'après ces temps-la Dieu n'a plus été leur chef: & c'est ce qu'on ne prouvera jamais. *Reponse aux Sentimens de quelques Theol. de Hol.* p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> — C'est à dire que pour prouver que Dieu n'a pas été chef des Hebreux, après l'élection des rois, il est hors de propos de prouver qu'il n'a plus fait les fonctions de chef de la republic. C'est ainsi que ce grand genie débrouille heureusement les matieres, & découvre d'abord ce qui est hors de propos, de ce qui ne l'est pas. *Defense des Sentimens*, p. 120.

“ That

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“ That a King does not cease to be King, when he puts in a Viceroy, who executes the regal office by deputation.”

Le Clerc returns to the charge in his *Defense of the Sentiments*: — “ The Israelites did not reject God as Protector, but as civil Chief, as I observed before. They would have a King who should determine sovereignly, and command their armies. Which, before this, God himself did by the ministry of the Judges, whom he raised up, from time to time, from the midst of Israel. In this sense we must understand absolutely the words of God, in Samuel, *that I should not reign over them*.” It is indeed strange, that, after writing two books, he should still insist on so foolish a paralogism<sup>b</sup>, That God’s *giving up* his office of civil Chief, was a necessary consequence of the People’s *demanding* it. For, that they did demand it, I acknowledge. Let us consider then this whole matter a little more attentively.

Samuel (and I desire the Deists would take notice of it) had now, by a wise and painful direction of affairs, restored the purity of Religion, and rescued his Nation from the power of the Philistines, and their other hostile neighbours ; against whom

<sup>a</sup> Les Israélites ne rejetterent pas Dieu comme protecteur, mais comme chef politique, ainsi que je l’ai marqué. Ils voulurent un roi qui les jugeât souverainement, & qui commandât leurs armées, au lieu qu’auparavant Dieu lui-même le faisoit, par le ministère des juges, qu’il suscitoit de temps en temps au milieu d’Israël.—En ce sens il faut entendre absolument les paroles de Dieu dans Samuël, *afin que je ne regne point sur eux*, p. 121.

<sup>b</sup> However, foolish as it is, the Reader hath seen, how a late Sermonizer has borrowed it, and how little force he has added to it.

they were utterly unable to make head when he entered upon the public Administration. At this very time, the People, debauched, as usual, by power and prosperity, took the pretence of the corrupt conduct of the Prophet's two sons <sup>c</sup>, to go in a tumultuary manner, and demand a King. But the secret spring of their rebellion was the ambition of their leaders; who could live no longer without the splendour of a regal Court and Household; GIVE ME (say they, as the Prophet Hosea interprets their insolent demand) A KING AND PRINCES <sup>d</sup>; where every one of them might shine a distinguished Officer of State. They could get nothing when their affairs led them to their Judges' poor residence, in the *Schools of the Prophets*, but the GIFT of the *Holy Spirit* <sup>e</sup>; which a Courtier, I presume, would not prize even at the rate Simon Magus held it, of a paultry piece of money.—This it was, and this only, that made their demand criminal. For, the chusing Regal rather than Aristocratic Viceroy was a thing plainly indulged to them by the Law of Moses, in the following admonition: *When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a KING over me, like as the nations that are about me: Thou shalt in any wise set him King over thee, whom the LORD THY GOD SHALL CHUSE: one from amongst thy Brethren shalt thou set King over thee: Thou mayest not set a Stranger over thee which is not thy brother* <sup>f</sup>. The plain meaning of which caution is, that they should take care, when they demanded a King, that they thought of none other than such a King who was to be GOD'S DEPUTY. As therefore Court-ambition

<sup>c</sup> 1 SAM. viii. 5. and xii. 12.

<sup>e</sup> 1 SAM. x. 10. and Chap. xix.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xiii. ver. 10.

<sup>f</sup> DEUT. xvii, 14, 15.

only



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only was in the wicked view of the Ringleaders of these malecontents, and no foolish fears for the State, or hopes of bettering the public Administration, it is evident to all acquainted with the genius of this Time and People, that compliance with their demand, must have ended in the utter destruction of the Mosaic RELIGION as well as LAW. But it was GOD's purpose to keep them SEPARATE, in order to preserve the memory of himself amidst an idolatrous World. And this not being to be done but by the preservation of their Religion and Law, we must needs conclude that he would not give way to their rebellious demand.

And what we are brought to conclude from the *reason of the thing*, the *history* of this transaction clearly enough confirms. For it having now informed us how GOD consented to give this People a King; To shew us, that he had not cast off the Government, but only transferred the immediate Administration to a Deputy, and consequently, that *their* King was *his* Viceroy, it tells us next, how He was pleased to bring them to repentance in an extraordinary way; the gracious method he commonly employed when he intended to pardon. Samuel assembled the People<sup>s</sup>; and to convince them of their crime in demanding a King, called down the present vengeance of their offended God in a storm of *thunder and rain at the time of wheat-harvest*<sup>a</sup>. This sudden desolation brings them to a sense of their guilt, and they implore mercy and forgiveness: "And all the People said unto Samuel, "Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, "that we die not; for we have added unto all our "sins this evil, to ask us a King. And Samuel

<sup>a</sup> 1 SAM. xii.

<sup>b</sup> 1 SAM. xii. 17, 18.

" said

“ said unto the People, fear not: (ye have done all  
 “ this wickedness: yet turn not aside from follow-  
 “ ing the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your  
 “ heart; and turn ye not aside: for then should  
 “ you go after vain things, which cannot profit  
 “ nor deliver, for they are vain) For the Lord  
 “ will *not forsake his People*, for his great Name’s  
 “ sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to *make*  
 “ *you his People*!” Here, we see, they repent,  
 are pardoned, and received again into Grace, as  
 appears by the concluding promise, that the *Theo-*  
*cratic* form should be continued. They are ready  
 to give up their King, and yet a regal character  
 is instituted. The plain conclusion from all this  
 is, that their King was given, and, now at least,  
 received, as GOD’S DEPUTY.

But Father Simon is at length provoked into a  
 Reason, and that, to say the truth, no weak one.  
 God, he observes, kept the election of their King  
 in his own hands\*. But *this*, Le Clerc says, *proves*  
*nothing*. How so? *Because, according to this reason-*  
*ing, we should be obliged to say that God oftener dis-*  
*charged the functions of civil Chief in the idolatrous*  
*realm of the ten Tribes than in that of Judah: for*  
*that was elective, this, hereditary*<sup>1</sup>. And what if we  
 do?

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 19. & seq.

\* Et une preuve même qu’il ne cessoit pas d’être leur chef  
 par cette election, c’est qu’il s’en rend le maître. *Reponse aux*  
*Sentimens*, p. 55.

<sup>1</sup> Pour ce que dit M. Simon que Dieu *se rend maître de l’elec-*  
*tion des Rois*, il ne s’ensuit nullement qu’il continuât d’être pour  
 cela chef politique de la republique d’Israël; puisque si cela  
 étoit, il faudroit dire que Dieu faisoit beaucoup plus souvent  
 les fonctions de chef de l’état dans le royaume Idolatre des dix  
 tribus, que dans celui de Juda. Car ce dernière royaume étoit  
 hereditaire,

do? Where will be the harm of it? The two kingdoms made up but one Commonwealth; of which God, as Head, governed by two Viceroys. And if he oftener acted immediately in the kingdom of Israel, there was a plain reason for it; Its inhabitants were more given to idolatrous worship; and needed more the frequency of an extraordinary restraint. And in effect, we find he did interfere greatly in other instances, as well as in the election of their Kings.

In truth, F. Simon seemed to see as little into the force of the observation (*that God reserved the choice of their King to himself*) when he urged it, as M. Le Clerc did, when he despised it: yet it is strongly conclusive for the continuation of the Theocracy. For had the visible King which the Israelites demanded been granted to them, that is, a King in his own right, sovereign, and at the head of a new Constitution, or indeed, any other than a Viceroy to the KING of the Theocracy, the choice of him would have been reserved to the People. It was a natural right; and more than that, a right which God did not think fit to take from them, when he first accepted the regal office for himself. But if the People have, by natural Law, a right to chuse their own King, that King hath, by civil Law, a prerogative to chuse his own Deputy. When we see him therefore exercise this prerogative, we may be assured that the King chosen was no other than his Deputy, as SOVEREIGN of the Theocracy. But to return to the two Combatants.—Here the Dispute ended; and for farther satisfaction,

hereditaire, & étoit possédé par la maison de David, sans qu'il fût besoin d'aucune election, au lieu qu'il le fit plusieurs elections dans celui des dix tribus. *Defense des Sentimens*, p. 121, 122.

Le



Le Clerc refers us to a book of Spencer's, written professedly upon this very subject<sup>m</sup>. It is his tract *De Theocratia Judaica*. What is to be found there, besides the arguments which Le Clerc has borrowed from it, and which have been considered already, I shall now with some reluctance inform the Reader.

This treatise is by no means in the number of those on which Spencer raised his reputation. He goes on a wrong hypothesis; he uses weak arguments; and he is confused and inconsistent in his assertions,

1. He thinks the Theocracy was established by degrees<sup>n</sup>, and abrogated by degrees<sup>o</sup>. A conceit highly absurd, as God was the Lawgiver, and Supreme Magistrate of the Jews.—He thinks the first step to its introduction was their protection at the Red Sea<sup>p</sup>; and the first step to its aboli-

<sup>m</sup> Il n'est pas nécessaire que je m'arrête d'avantage à cela, après ce qu'en a dit le savant *Spencer* dans un traité qu'il a fait exprès sur cette matière. *Lib. i. de Legg. Heb. Ritual. Defense des Sent.* p. 122.

<sup>n</sup> — Neminem in sacris literis vel mediocriter versatum latere potest *Theocratiam* in ipso rerum Israeliticarum exordio aliquatenus obtinuisse, ad *auxum* autem non nisi gradatim & post legem in Sinai datam pervenisse. *Vol. i. p. 239.*

<sup>o</sup> Cum autem regiminis hujus, non simul & semel, sed per gradus quosdam, jacturam fecerint, placet hic veritatis fugientis vestigia gradatim premere. *Id. ib.*

<sup>p</sup> Gradum primum ad potestatem regiam obtinendam fecisse videtur Deus, cum gentem Israeliticam insigni illo potentia & bonitatis suae documento (*Ægyptiorum* in Mari Rubro submersione) sibi devinxisset. *Id. ib.*

tion,

tion, their demand of a King<sup>a</sup>: That it was still more impaired when Saul and David got possession of the throne<sup>b</sup>: That it approached much nearer to its end when it became hereditary, under Salomon<sup>c</sup>: and yet, for all this, he confesses that some obscure footsteps of it remained even to the time of CHRIST<sup>d</sup>.

2. In his reasoning for the abolition of the THEOCRACY, instead of employing the general principles of civil Policy, which were the only means of coming to the truth, he insists much on the disuse of Urim and Thummim, &c. which Le Clerc borrowed from him; and which hath been already considered. He brings the despotic power of the Kings<sup>e</sup>, as another argument; which, I think, proves just the contrary. For if so be, that these Kings were the Viceroys of God, whose power was despotic, their power must be despotic too, i. e. independent on all but the SOVEREIGN. Not so, if they were Monarchs in their own right.

<sup>a</sup> Primo itaque ad certum affirmo, quod Israelitæ, regem sibi dari postulantes, gradum primum ad imperii hujus desideratissimi ruinam fecisse videantur. *Id. ib.*

<sup>b</sup> Dei regimen multo magis imminutum est, cum Deus *Saulen & Davidem* ad rerum arbitrium evocasset, p. 240.

<sup>c</sup> Salomone rerum potito, Theocratia multo vicinior ἀφαισµὴν non immerito censeatur.

<sup>d</sup> Judæi Theocratix veteris indicia & vestigia quædam obsecratoria, ad extrema usque politix suæ tempora retinere—ipso Domini nostri seculo, Hierosolyma civitas magni regis audit. *Ib.*

<sup>e</sup> — adeo ut hinc constet eos se pro regibus gessisse, & potestatem arbitriariam exercuisse. *Ib.*

3. Though,

3. Though, as we observed, Spencer, in the second section of his fourth chapter, supposes a gradual decay of the Theocracy; and that even some obscure footsteps of it remained to the time of CHRIST; yet, in the following section, he, all the way, argues upon the supposition of an absolute and entire abrogation by the establishment of the Kings<sup>\*v</sup>. To proceed.

## II. That

\* — Regiminis hujus mutati vel abrogati causa principalis — De regiminis hujus abrogati effectu vel eventu breviter dissendum est — &c. p. 241, — 243.

v Dr. Sykes has undertaken to confute the censure here passed upon Dr. Spencer. *Here it is (says this Answerer) that Mr. W. attacks Dr. Spencer's dissertation on the Jewish Theocracy. Are we not now from hence to IMAGINE that Dr. Spencer was one of those writers that supposed the Theocracy to have ended with the Judges?* [An examination of Mr. W's account, &c. p. 168.] What demands of *imagination* his trade of Answering may have upon him, I do not know. But from my words, a fair reasoner would *imagine* nothing but that I meant to prove what I said; namely, that Dr. Spencer's discourse of the Theocracy is *weak and inconsistent*.

*His first charge (says he) against Spencer is, that he thought the Theocracy was established by degrees, and abrogated by degrees. "A conceit highly absurd," says Mr. W. But wherein lies the absurdity of this gradual progress and gradual declension?* [p. 170.] The *Absurdity* lies here. When God is pleased to assume the character of civil Magistrate, he must, like all other Magistrates, enter upon his office at once, and (as common sense requires) abdicate it at once. Now the Government under such a Magistrate is what we properly call a Theocracy. Therefore to talk of the *gradual progress and gradual declension* of this mode of civil relation, is the same as to talk of the gradual progress and gradual declension of Paternity, or any other mode of natural relation; of which, I suppose, till now, no body ever heard.

He goes on — *if there be any absurdity or inconsistency, in this manner of speaking, it may be JUSTIFIED by Mr. W's own authority.* That is, my absurdity will justify another Man's. But this



II. That this Theocracy, the administration of which lay, as it were, in abeyance during the Captivity,

this is doing me an honour which I do not pretend to. Well, but how do I *justify* Dr. Spencer? Why, I say, it seems, "That in " the period immediately preceeding the Jewish Captivity, on " the gradual withdrawing the extraordinary Providence from " them, they began to entertain doubts concerning God's " further peculiar regard to them as his chosen People." So that here (says Dr. Sykes) *he expressly owns a GRADUAL WITHDRAWING OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE from the Jews. And where is the absurdity of Dr. Spencer's GRADUAL DECLENSION OR IMMINUTION OF THE THEOCRACY, which Mr. W's gradual withdrawing of the extraordinary Providence is not liable unto. Or was not the gradual withdrawing of the extraordinary Providence a proper imminution of the Theocracy?* [p. 171.] He is so pleased with this argument that he repeats it at p. 218. Yet who would have suspected him of what he here discovers, a total ignorance of any difference between the FORM of Government and the ADMINISTRATION of it. Now Dr. Spencer talked of the gradual decline of the *form of Government*, which I thought absurd: I spoke of the gradual decline of the *administration* of it; which, whether it be equally absurd let those determine who have seen (unless perhaps the rarity of the fact has made it escape observation) an *administration* of Government grow worse and worse, while the *form* of it still continued the same.

So much as to Spencer's *absurdity*. We come next to his *inconsistency*, in supposing some foot-steps of the Theocracy till the time of Christ, and yet that it was entirely abrogated by the establishment of the Kings. Of this inconsistency, Dr. Spencer is absolved by the dexterity of our Answerer, in the following manner: Here again is Dr. Spencer much misrepresented, from not considering WHAT HE MEANT by the ABRIGATION of God's Government. Not that the Theocracy entirely ceased; but the Government received an ALTERATION and ABATEMENT. And therefore he uses more than once the phrase of *RE-CIMINIS MUTATI*, in this very section; Where is the absurdity and inconsistency of this way of reasoning, unless abrogation is made to signify a total abolition, and duration is to be construed cessation?

He asks, *where is the absurdity of this way of reasoning?* I did not accuse Spencer of *absurdity* in his way of reasoning, but of

tivity, was again exercised after the return from it, is evident from the express declaration of the Almighty,

of contradiction in his way of expression. I see no reasoning there is, or can be, in a man's delivering what he thinks a fact; such as his opinion of the duration of a form of Government. But he who cannot distinguish *reasoning* from *expression*, may be well excused for confounding the *form of Government*, and the *administration of Government* with one another.

However, *Spencer* (he says) is much misrepresented; he did not mean by ABROGATION a CEASING; but an ALTERATION and ABATEMENT. It seems then, a writer is much misrepresented if, when he is charged with an inconsistent expression, his meaning may be proved consistent. A good commodious principle for the whole class of Answerers! But he tells us that *abrogation* [regimen abrogatum] does not signify *ceasing*. Where did he get his latin? for the Roman writers use it only in the sense of dissolution, abolition, or the entire *ceasing* of an office or command. What then does it signify? ALTERATION (he says) and ABATEMENT. But now where did he get his English? Our Country writers, I think, use the word *alteration* to signify a change; and *abatement*, to signify no change; no alteration in the qualities of things, but a diminution only in the vigour of their operations. What the *alteration* of a Theocracy, or any other form of Government is, we well understand; but what the *abatement* of it is, one is much at a loss to conceive. However, this I know, that Dr. Sykes here confirms what I charge upon him, the confounding the mode of Government with the administration of it: *Alteration* being applicable to the former, and *abatement*, only to the latter.

But his inference from this special reasoning, is worth all the rest — and THEREFORE *Spencer* uses, more than once, the phrase of regiminis MUTATI, in this very section. Therefore! Wherefore? Why, because by *abrogati* he meant only *abated*, therefore he uses *mutati*, more than once to explain himself. That is to say, “because, by *totum*, I mean *pari*, THEREFORE I use *omne* more than once, to explain my meaning.” Well, if he did not clear it up before, he has done it now.

— And where (says he) is the absurdity or inconsistency of this way of reasoning? Nay, for that matter, the reasoning is full as good as the Criticism. But here he should have stopped; for so fatal is his expression, when the fit of Answering is upon him,

mighty, by the Prophet Haggai: *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong,*

him, that he cannot ask quarter for one blunder without committing another. — *Unless ABRÖGATION is made to signify a TOTAL ABOLITION, and duration is construed to be cessation.* — “ I can find (says he) no absurdity nor inconsistency in Dr. Spencer, without perverting the common signification of words:” — *without calling duration cessation.* — This is his Argument; and so far was well. But he goes on — *and abrogation, a total abolition.* Here he sinks again; for *abrogation was abolition*, amongst all nations and languages, till Dr. Sykes first pleaded in *abatement*. Well, but our Answerer will go farther: and having so ably vindicated Dr. Spencer, he will now shew, tho’ the Dr. be *consistent*, yet so am not I: for that I hold, the extraordinary Providence entirely ceased on the return from the Captivity: From whence, (says this subtle logician) I argue thus, “ If the EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE “ entirely ceased *on the full Settlement of the Jews after their* “ *Return*, it ceased some centuries at least before the days of “ Christ; and CONSEQUENTLY the THEOCRACY must have “ ceased some centuries before the days of Christ. How then “ is Mr. W. consistent about the duration of the Theo- “ cracy, since he pleads for its continuance till Christ’s time, “ and yet maintains that IT entirely ceased so long before his “ time \* ?”

The argument, we see, gathers even as it rolls from his mouth. In the beginning of the sentence, The *ceasing of an extraordinary Providence* only implied in consequence, the *ceasing of the Theocracy*; but, before we get to the end, an *extraordinary Providence* and a *Theocracy* are one and the same thing. “ Mr. W. pleads for its [a Theocracy’s] continuance “ *till Christ’s time, and yet maintains that IT entirely ceased* “ *so long before his Time.*” Thus again to the same purpose at p. 178. “ Or by what rule does he form a judgment that “ *WHAT* was gradually decaying to the Captivity, was entirely “ to cease after their Return and full Settlement; and yet was “ to continue till Christ’s Time ?” — Nay, if he begins to talk of *Rules*, let me ask him by *what Rule* he found out, “ that “ a *Monarchy* and an exact *Administration of Justice* are one “ and the same thing ?” The truth is, our Examiner was thus grievously misled by the ambiguity of the *English* word THE

\* Exam. of Mr. W’s Account, &c. p. 173—4.



strong, O Joshua, Son of Josedeck the High Priest, and be strong, all ye People of the Land, saith the Lord, and work : for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts; ACCORDING TO THE WORD THAT I COVENANTED WITH YOU WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT, SO MY SPIRIT REMAINETH AMONGST YOU : fear ye not<sup>a</sup>. What was that Covenant ? That Israel should be his People, and He, their God and King. Therefore it cannot barely mean, that he would be their God, and they should be his People; for this was but *part* of the Covenant. Nor can it mean that they should be conducted by an extraordinary providence, as at their coming out of Egypt, and during the first periods of the Theocracy; for this was but the *effects* of the Covenant : and besides, we know that that dispensation of Providence soon ceased after the Re-establishment. The meaning therefore must be, that he would still continue their KING as well as God. Yet at the same Time, when this Theocracy was restored, it was both fit, on account of its own dignity, and necessary for the People's assurance,

GOVERNMENT; which signifies either the MODE of Civil Policy, or the ADMINISTRATION of it. But was this to be expected of a man who had been all his life-time writing ABOUT GOVERNMENT?

To conclude this long note, The charge against SPENCER was of *absurdity* and *contradiction* in one single instance amidst a thousand excellencies. Dr. Sykes assumes the honour of his Defence. But with what judgment, he soon gives us to understand, when he could find no other part of that immortal Book to do himself the credit of supporting, but the *discourse concerning the Theocracy*; much in the spirit of that ancient Advocate of Cicero, who while the Patriot's character was torn in pieces by his Enemies, would needs vindicate him from the imputation of a Wart upon his Nose, against his Friends.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 4, 5.

that it should be attended with some unusual display of divine favour. Accordingly, Prophets were raised up; and an extraordinary Providence, for some short time, administered, as appears from many places in those Prophets<sup>b</sup>.

III. That the Theocracy continued even to the coming of CHRIST, may be seen from hence.—

1. Whenever it was abrogated, it must needs be done in the same solemn manner in which it was established; so that the one might be as well known as the other: because it was of the highest importance to a people so strictly bound to obedience, not to be mistaken concerning the power under which they lived. Natural equity requires this formality as a necessary concomitant in the imposing and abrogating of all civil laws and institutions whatsoever. Now the Theocracy having never been thus abolished till the coming of Christ, we conclude that it continued to subsist till that time.

2. Nor indeed, could it have been abolished without dissolving the whole frame of the Republic; since all the Laws of it, whether as to their equity, force, or fitness, as well as the whole Ritual of Worship, respected, and referred to God as civil Government. But neither by the declaration of any Prophet, nor by the act of any good King, did the Institution suffer the least change in any of its parts, from the time of its establishment by Moses to its dissolution by JESUS CHRIST, either by addition, correction, or abrogation. Consequently, the *Theocracy*

<sup>b</sup> Hag. i. 6—11. Chap. ii. ver. 16—19. Zech. viii. 12. Mal. iii. 10, 11.



was existing throughout that whole period. Nothing being more absurd than to suppose that national Laws, all made in reference to the form of Government, should remain unvariable, while the Government itself was changed. For what the Author of the epistle to the Hebrews says of the PRIEST (in a Constitution where the two Societies were incorporated) must be equally true of the KING.—THE PRIESTHOOD BEING CHANGED, THERE IS MADE ALSO, OF NECESSITY, A CHANGE OF THE LAW<sup>c</sup>. And now it was that JESUS, the MESSIAH, who is here spoken of as making this change, in quality of PRIEST, made it likewise in quality of KING. For, as we learn from the history of his Ministry, he came as Heir of GOD, to succeed immediately without any interregnum, in his Father's kingdom: GOD having DELIVERED UP to his Son the kingdom, of which the Father was, till then, in possession. And this change in the Government, from the *temporal Theocracy* of GOD the Father, to the *spiritual Kingdom* of GOD the Son, was made in the same solemn and authentic manner in which that Theocracy was introduced. GOD raised up from amongst his chosen People, a *Prophet like unto Moses*, who exercised the *Legislative* power, like Moses; and assumed the *Regal* power, like GOD. He gave a NEW LAW to be administered in a NEW KINGDOM, and confirmed the divinity of the Dispensation by the most stupendous miracles. Thus, we find, the Theocracy did indeed subsist till the coming of Christ.

And this ABOLITION of it by the Son of GOD, I take to be the true completion of that famous PROPHECY of Jacob, of which so much hath been written and disputed. THE SCEPTRE SHALL NOT

<sup>c</sup> Chap. vii. ver. 12.



Sect. 3. of MOSES demonstrated. 245

DEPART FROM JUDAH, NOR A LAWGIVER FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET, UNTIL SHILOH COME<sup>d</sup>, i. e. the THEOCRACY shall continue over the Jews<sup>e</sup> until Christ come to take possession of his Father's Kingdom: For there was never any *Lawgiver*<sup>f</sup>, in *Judab*, but God by the ministry of Moses, until the coming of his SON.

JESUS the MESSIAH, the best interpreter of the Oracles of God, of which he himself is the capital subject, and for whose sake the *chain of Prophecies* was so early drawn out, and extended to such a length, seems to have paraphrased and explained the words of Jacob concerning the *departure of the Sceptre from Judab*, by his declaration recorded in St. Matthew, THE PROPHETS AND THE LAW PROPHESED TILL JOHN<sup>g</sup>, i. e. "the Mosaic Law, and the Theocratic Government by which it was dispensed, continued in Being till the approach of this harbinger of Christ, John the Baptist; but was then superseded by the promulgation of a *new Law* and the establishment of a *new Kingdom*."

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.

<sup>e</sup> Who took their Name from the Tribe of *Judab*; the rest being incorporated in that Tribe, or extinguished in Captivity.

<sup>f</sup> *Mbbakek*, *Legislator*, aut *Legis interpres*. But the first is its original and proper Signification. And thus Isaiah [chap. xxxiii. ver. 22.] "The Lord is our *Judge*, the Lord is our LAW-GIVER, [*Mbbakekenou*] the Lord is our *King*, he will save us." Where the word *Mbbakek* is used in its proper Signification of *Lawgiver*; the other Sense of Dispenser or Interpreter of the Law being contained in the titles of *Judge* and *King*.

<sup>g</sup> Matth. xi. 13.

But as this interpretation is so different from the common, and understands the Prophecy as fortelling that the Jewish nation should not be bereft of Sovereign Power, by falling under a foreign Yoke, till the Advent of the MESSIAH, the Reader will excuse me, if I detain him a little longer on so important a subject.

The common notion of the *Sceptre of Judah*, is explained three different ways, each of which has it's particular Followers.

1. Some suppose the *Sceptre of Judah* to signify the SOVEREIGNTY OF THE JEWISH NATION at large.

2. Others again suppose it to signify the SOVEREIGNTY OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH.

3. And a third sort contend that it signifies not a sovereign or regal, but a TRIBAL SCEPTRE only.

In the Sense of a *Sovereignty in the Jewish people at large*, which is the most general interpretation, and, in my Opinion, the most natural of the three, (as the whole People were long denominated from that tribe) the pretended Prophecy was not only never fulfilled, but has been directly falsified: because long before the *coming of Shilo*, or of Christ, the Sceptre or Sovereignty in the Jewish people was *departed*. During the Babylonian and Persian Captivity, and while afterwards they continued in a tributary dependence on the Greeks, they could, in no reasonable sense, be said to have retained their *Sceptre*, their Sovereignty, or independent

pendent Rule. But it may be replied, "that the Prophecy by *departure*, meant a final departure; and in these instances it was but temporary: for CYRUS restored the *Sceptre* to them; and when it was again lost in the grecian Empire, the MACCABEI recovered it for them." Though this be allowed, yet we must still confess, that the Romans, who, under Pompey reduced Judea to a dependant Province, effectually overthrew the Prophecy. POMPEY took Jerusalem; and left to Hyrcanus, the last of the Asmonean family, only the office of High-Priest. From this time, to the birth of Christ, it was ever in dependence on the Romans, who disposed of all things at their pleasure. The Senate gave the Government of Judæa to Antipater; and then to Herod his Son, under the title of King. And Archelaus, on the Death of his Father, did not dare to take possession of this subject-kingdom, till he had obtained leave of Augustus: who afterwards, on complaint of the Jews against him, banished him into the West, where he died. Now the precarious Rule of a dependent Monarch could no more be called a *Sceptre* (which in the figurative mode of all languages, signifies *Sovereignty*) than the condition of the Jews could be said to be sovereign, when this Archelaus was deposed, and Coponius a Roman Knight made procurator of Judæa, at that time which the supporters of this interpretation fix for the *Departure of the Sceptre*.

I reckon for nothing another objection which has been made to the common interpretation, "That after the return from the Captivity, the Jews were, from time to time, under a form of Government resembling rather the Aristocratic than the Monarchic;" because the *Sceptre* or Sovereignty,



reignty, belongs equally to all those Forms. This then makes no more against the common interpretation, than the other, I am now going to mention, makes for it, namely, that the Senate of Rome gave the Government of Judæa to Herod under the title of KING; since the dependent rule of this Roitelet was as certainly the *departure of a Sceptre*, as a Sovereignty under an aristocratic Government was the *continuance of it*.

The learned Father Tournemine was so embarrassed with these difficulties, that in a dissertation on *the Sceptre of Judah*, he endeavours to shew, that the proof of the predicted birth of Christ from this Prophecy, arises not from the *departure of the Sceptre*, but from its re-establishment under the Messiah<sup>b</sup>. Which thesis, (as the intelligent reader may observe) fairly put him in the road; and, had it been pursued, would have led him, to the sense I am here endeavouring to establish.

The second branch of the common interpretation is, That, by the *Sceptre* is signified a *civil sovereignty in the tribe of Judah*. This, in my opinion, has still less of stability than the other. It supposes that the *Sceptre*, or the supreme rule of the Jewish People, remained in natives of that Tribe, from the time of David to the coming of Christ. But Petavius hath shewn, that from the giving of the Prophecy to the time of David, (a Space of above six hundred Years) there was but one or two Rulers descended from the Tribe of Judah; And that from the death of Sedecias to the birth of Christ (a space of near the same number of years) all the Rulers of the Jewish People were of other

<sup>b</sup> Journal de Trevoux. Mars 1705. & Feb. 1721.

Tribes; the Asmonean princes particularly being all of the tribe of Levi<sup>1</sup>. The Abbé de Houterville, who, at a very easy rate, hath obtained the reputation of an able defender of Revelation<sup>k</sup>, hath indeed invented a curious expedient to evade this difficulty. His system is, that the rulers of the tribe of Levi (and so I suppose of the rest) exercised this Sovereignty by leave, or deputation from the Tribe of Judah. To such wretched shifts are learned men reduced, when they have reversed the order of things, and made Truth to wait upon their Systems; instead of making their Systems subservient to Truth.

These two senses, (by one or other of which the common interpretation hath been long supported) being found on a stricter scrutiny, to be untenable, men cast about for a third: and a happy one it was thought to be, which contrived, that, *Sceptre* should signify a *domestic*, not a *civil* rule; a *TRIBAL*, not a *SOVEREIGN Sceptre*; and of which, they say, *JUDAH*, at the giving of the Prophecy, was already possessed. This expedient, the learned Dr. Sher-

<sup>1</sup> — At complures antiquorum recentiorumque qui in illa Jacobi sententia *Judam* peculiari de tribu intellexerunt, id sibi Patriarcham voluisse credunt, ex stirpe ac progenie *Juda* filii ipsius perpetuo Judæis præfuturum aliquem eorumque fore principem, donec Christus adveniat. Sed in hujus reddenda dicti ratione multum æstuant, siquidem vetustatis omni teste memoriâ refelluntur, quæ non solum ante Davidem unum alterumve duntaxat ex illa tribu rexisse populum ostendit, annis circiter 675 ab edita prophetia; sed etiam post Sedecias necem, occasumque Urbis & Templi ad Christum usque de alia quam *Juda* stirpe duces extitisse annis 588; et enim Machabæos constat ex Levitica et Sacerdotali progenie descendere. *Ration. Temporum*, Par. II. L. III. C. 16.

<sup>k</sup> See his book intitled, *Religion prouvée par les Faits*.

lock, Bishop of London, has honoured with his support and protection<sup>1</sup>.

It would be want of respect to so eminent a Person, to pass over this refinement with the same slight notice that has been given to the other two. I shall therefore do myself the honour to consider his Lordship's reasoning more at large.

His Lordship's first argument in support of a *tribal Sceptre* is—That the *Sceptre's not DEPARTING from Judah* shews plainly that Judah had a Sceptre when the prophecy was given.—“Is there  
“any sense (says his Lordship) in saying that a  
“thing shall not *depart*, which never was yet in  
“*possession*? The prophecy is not a *grant* of the  
“Sceptre, but a *confirmation* of it. Now a con-  
“firmation of nothing, is nothing: And, to  
“make it something, the *possession* of the thing  
“*confirmed* must be supposed. I know not by  
“what rules of language or grammar, these words  
“can be construed into a *grant* of the Scep-  
“tre. And tho' so many writers and interpre-  
“ters have followed this sense, yet I do not re-  
“member to have seen one passage or parallel  
“expression from the Scripture, or any other  
“author, produced to justify the interpreta-  
“tion<sup>m</sup>.”

*Is there any Sense (his Lordship asks) in saying a thing shall not DEPART which never was yet in possession?* Yes certainly, a very good one, in a Pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Use and Intent of Prophecy.* Dissert. III, 5th Edit. 1749.

<sup>m</sup> Page 326—7.



PHESY, where the subject is not of a present but of a future possession; and where the Holy Spirit is wont to *call the things that are not, as though they were.* The Subject is a Sceptre, which could in no sense, not even in the sense of a *tribal sceptre*, be in possession of Judah before he became a Tribe. His Lordship indeed supposes he became a Tribe immediately after the death of Jacob.—*This power in the hands of the Tribe that came immediately upon the death of Jacob.* But is it so? Was not that accession as properly *Levi's*, as it had been a thousand years after? Judah then, at the time of this Prophecy, not being in possession of his Sceptre, a *confirmation of nothing is nothing*, &c. so that all the absurdities here imagined, stick to his Lordship's *Ara of the Sceptre*, as well as to the common one. But let us suppose that Jacob's Prophecy and death were identical; and then see how he proves his assertion, that Judah and the Rest became Tribes immediately on the death of Jacob. His proof is a little extraordinary—*When Moses and Aaron led them into the Wilderness* (says his Lordship) *we bear of the ELDERS of the people, and the RULERS of the congregation.* His assertion, is that the *tribal sceptre* sprung up from the ashes of Jacob; and his proof, that it arose and flourished in the Wilderness. This is indeed the truth; it was a Native of that place; as may be fairly *presumed* from the occasion which the Israelites had of a tribal rule, (namely, to fit them for the warfare they were now about to undertake), and as may be fairly *proved* from the first chapter of the book of Numbers—“And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai: Take ye the sum of

“ all the congregation of the Children of Israel,  
 “ after their families, by the house of their Fa-  
 “ thers—all *that are able to go forth to war in*  
 “ *Israel*; Thou and Aaron shall number them with  
 “ their armies. And with you, there SHALL BE  
 “ A MAN of every tribe; every one HEAD OF  
 “ THE HOUSE of his Fathers—and they as-  
 “ sembled all the congregation; and they declared  
 “ their pedigrees, after their families, by the  
 “ house of their Fathers—These were those which  
 “ were numbered: and the PRINCES OF ISRAEL  
 “ BEING TWELVE MEN, EACH ONE WAS FOR THE  
 “ HOUSE OF HIS FATHERS. And the Children of  
 “ Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his  
 “ own camp, and every man by his own standard,  
 “ throughout their Hosts—And the Children of  
 “ Israel did according to all the Lord commanded  
 “ them<sup>p</sup>.” Then follows the order of the Tribes  
 in their tents<sup>q</sup>. Now surely, this detailed  
 account of these *tribal Sceptres* hath all the marks  
 of a new Institution.

The Bishop's hypothesis therefore is without  
 foundation: the *Sceptre* was something in *rever-*  
*son*. Indeed the particular words, as well as the  
 general nature of Prophecy, declare the subject to  
 be of things future. — “ And Jacob called to his  
 “ sons, and said, *Gather yourselves together that I*  
 “ *may tell you what shall befall you IN THE LAST*  
 “ *DAYS*.” The Bishop owns, that *most of the*  
*Interpreters*, from these words, *take it for granted,*  
*and it is the common notion, that the Sceptre was*  
*not to be settled in Judah's family till some ages af-*  
*ter the death of Jacob*<sup>r</sup>. I think they had reason

<sup>p</sup> Numb. i. 4—5—18—44—52—54.

<sup>r</sup> Gen. Chap. xlix. ver. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Page 326.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. ii.

so to do. How does his Lordship prove they had not? In this manner. "The observation, when rightly applied, is right. And if the *continuance* of the Sceptre of Judah be, as I suppose, the thing foretold, it extends to the very last days of the Jewish State; and in this respect the interpretation is justified." *i. e.* if you will agree that *futurity* refers to the *continuance*, and not to the *establishment* of the Sceptre, his Lordship will shew you, how well he can evade this objection. But tho' we were inclined to be thus complaisant, the book of Numbers would not suffer us; which informs us (we see) that even the *tribal Sceptre* was established long after the death of Jacob. But to go no farther than the Prophecy. If each Tribe had a Scepter then existing, how happened it that Judah's is only named, *by way of CONFIRMATION*, as his Lordship will have it. For, *by way of GRANT*, we find Dan too had a Sceptre — *Dan shall judge his People as one of the Tribes [or SCEPTRES] of Israel*. But then Dan's is a *reversionary* Sceptre; and such a one destroys all his Lordship has been erecting.

To proceed — *The Prophecy* (says the Bishop) *is not a GRANT of a sceptre, but a CONFIRMATION*. The Prophecy itself plainly intimates the contrary. Jacob having told his sons that he would inform them of *what should befall them in the last days*, when he comes to Judah, he says, *Thy Father's Children shall bow down before thee*". This, if it was any thing, was the promise of a future Sceptre; and consequently it was the *grant*.

The Bishop goes on — *Now a confirmation of nothing is nothing*. Without doubt. But he sup-

\* Page 327.

" Ver. 8.



poses, (what I have shewn to be a mistake) that there was no *grant*. If there were a *grant*, then the confirmation of it was the confirmation of *something*. He seems to be apprehensive of so obvious an answer, for he immediately adds—I know not by what rules of language or grammar these words can be construed into a GRANT of the Sceptre. By the plainest rule in the world; that of common sense, the first and capital rule in every Art as well as grammar. For if Jacob made a declaration concerning some future prerogative, as the words—*Thy father's Children shall bow down before thee*—prove he did; and that this was the first time that Judah heard of it, as the words—I will tell you what shall befall you in the last days—prove it was; What can this Prophecy be but the GRANT of a Sceptre?

“ Though so many writers and interpreters (says  
 “ the Bishop) have followed this sense, yet I do  
 “ not remember to have seen one passage or parallel  
 “ expression from the Scripture or any other  
 “ writer produced to justify the interpretation.”  
 As for any other Writers than those of Scripture, I know of none who have prophesied: and the language of prophecy hath peculiarities unknown to other Compositions. But a Scripture-writer I am able to produce; and the same who has recorded this Prophecy of Jacob.—On Abraham's departure out of Haran, he being then seventy-five years of age, the Lord, as Moses tells us, appeared unto him and said—*Unto thy SEED will I give this Land* \*. Was this now a *grant*, or a confirmation only of SEED?  
 “ A confirmation only, says his Lordship: All the *grant* contained in these words is the grant of

\* Gen. chap. xii. ver. 7.

the LAND: and this shews, (will he say) that the *Seed* was now existing: for a nonentity is incapable of receiving any grant or donation: besides, *a confirmation of nothing is nothing*, and so on."—Notwithstanding all this, it so happens that Abraham had then *no Seed*.

Here now is a *parallel expression*, which holds *a fortiori*. For if it be a little anomalous to talk of a *thing's departing which was never yet in possession*, it seems to be much more absurd to talk of *giving* to persons who were never yet in Being. Besides, the promise of Rule actually accompanies the promise of its duration: but the express promise of *Seed* does not accompany the promise of a provision for it: I suppose the reason of this difference of expression in the two places is, because to get a Son is a much commoner case than to get a Sceptre.

His Lordship having thus shewn, that Judah's Sceptre was a *Sceptre in possession*, he will prove next, that it was not a *civil*, but a *tribal Sceptre*; which did not stretch its sovereignty over a whole nation, but was confined to the œconomic rule of the single tribe of Judah.—“Another thing supposed (says he) by most interpreters is, that the *Sceptre*, here mentioned, is an emblem of Dominion over all the tribes of Jacob. But how can that be? Had not Jacob settled a *sceptre* in every tribe? as is evident, ver. 16. *Dan shall judge his people as one of the Sceptre's of Israel*. Suppose a Father has divided his estate amongst twelve Sons, and should say of one of them, *The Estate shall not depart from John, for many ages*; could you possibly suppose him to mean more than the *share* of the Estate given to John?

“ Could



“ Could you understand him to mean that all the  
 “ estate, the twelve shares, should come to John  
 “ and continue in his family? The case is the  
 “ same here. Twelve Princes are created; Of one  
 “ of Them Jacob says, *the Sceptre shall not de-*  
 “ *part from him until Skilob come.* Is it not plain  
 “ then, that the Sceptres are distinguished here;  
 “ and that it is foretold of one, that it shall long  
 “ outlast the rest?—consequently the Sceptre here  
 “ is an emblem of Authority IN AND OVER ONE  
 “ TRIBE ONLY.”

His Lordship's reasoning, on which he grounds his parallel, stands thus—Judah's sceptre was the same with Dan's: now Dan's was a *tribal* Sceptre; therefore Judah's. But the very words of the Prophecy shew that the Sceptres were *specifically* different. Of Dan it is said, he shall judge his People AS ONE OF THE TRIBES OR SCEPTRES OF ISRAEL. Here is a *tribal* Sceptre marked out in express and proper terms. But of Judah's Sceptre it is said, THY FATHER'S CHILDREN SHALL BOW DOWN BEFORE THEE. Who were these *Children* but the eleven tribes? So that here a *civil* and a *sovereign* Sceptre, is as properly and expressly marked out for Judah, as before, a *tribal* one for Dan. This shall judge his own tribe; but the other shall, with his own tribe, judge the rest also. And yet if you will rely on his Lordship's Authority, he has a *case in point*; and he assures us “ that Judah's grant is the same as that of a Father's to his Son John, who when he had divided his estate amongst his twelve Sons should say of John's part, that it should not depart for many ages.”



He tells us next, "that the sense of the word *LAWGIVER* will follow the fate of the word *Sceptre*." In this, I perfectly agree with him. And therefore as his sense of the word *Sceptre* is found to be erroneous, his sense of the word *Lawgiver* must fall with it.

All that follows has nothing to do with the question of a *tribal Sceptre*, till we come to page 344. From thence to 350, he endeavours to take advantage of the hypothesis, to shew that this *tribal Sceptre* never departed from Judah till the coming of Christ: And here he had an easy task. But unluckily confounding *oeconomic* with *civil* Rule, he embarrasses himself as much, to make out the completion of the Prophecy, as the supporters of the other two branches of the common interpretation are wont to do.—As where he talks of the Jews in Babylon *ordering all matters relating to their own CIVIL and ECCLESIASTICAL Affairs*<sup>a</sup>.—Their coming back to their own Country as a people and a nation GOVERNED BY THEIR OWN LAWS—though never SO FREE A PEOPLE as they had been formerly. They lived under subjection to the Persian Monarch, and under the empire of the Greeks and Romans<sup>b</sup>.—The Evangelists shew that they lived under their OWN LAWS, and EXECUTED JUDGMENT amongst themselves<sup>c</sup>.—Had the exercise of JUDICIAL AUTHORITY amongst themselves<sup>d</sup>. Thus, like the Successors of Peter, who enlarged his Rock into a Citadel, his Lordship at last lengthens his *tribal Sceptre* into a *sovereign*. But if here he extends it over a People and Nation, he contracts it as much by and by; and we see it shrink up into a mere

<sup>a</sup> Page 329.<sup>a</sup> Page 345.<sup>b</sup> Page 347.<sup>c</sup> Page349. <sup>d</sup> Page 350.

philosophical or Stoical Regality. His Lordship undertakes to prove that the Jews were a FREE PEOPLE, from their own consciousness of their free condition.—*When our Saviour (says the Bishop) tells the Jews* “The truth shall make you free.” *they reply,* “We are Abraham’s Children, and were never “in bondage to any man.” This his Lordship urges as a proof of their *Civil freedom*. But if the Jews, who expected a carnal Messiah to lead real armies against their enemies, could suppose that Jesus made them an offer of sending *Truth* in person, to execute this commission for them, their stupidity must have exceeded every thing we have been told of it, by their Enemies. To be plain with his Lordship, the subject here debated, between Jesus and his Adversaries, is most foreign from his Lordship’s purpose. Our blessed Saviour is here addressing himself to the PHARISEES, a rank of men not ignorant of the Greek philosophy, (tho’ greatly mistaking its use when they brought so much of it into the Law) and therefore, with a Stoical dignity, he tells them—*the truth shall set you free*. They answer him in the same tone, *We are Abraham’s Children, and were never in bondage to any man*. That is, “Our principles are of divine extraction, and we never suffered ourselves to be enslaved to human decisions.” Surely (says his Lordship) *they had not forgot their captivity in Babylon*. Forgot! Why, Jesus had said nothing to put them in mind of it. The question is not about their freedom from Babylon, but from Error.—*Much less (says he) could they be ignorant of the power of the Romans over them at that time, and yet we see they account themselves free*. And why should they not, when the Question between Jesus

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and them was only who should make them so, He or ABRAHAM. Strange! that his Lordship's own account of their *civil condition* under the *power of the Romans*, should not have brought him to see, that the subject in hand was only of their *moral Condition*. Stranger still! that his solution of this difficulty should not have led him to discover that it was but imaginary—*they were free* (says his Lordship) *for they lived by their own Laws and executed judgment amongst themselves*.—Had he added—*but, at the precarious nod of an arbitrary Tyrant*—it would doubtless have given great force to his observation: For, about this time, Coponius, a Roman Knight, was named Procurator of Judea. Nay, even the precarious privilege of punishing capitally was now taken from them: They had a pagan Governor; and Justice was administered, not by their own Forms of Law, but by the Roman. An admirable character of *civil freedom*!

His Lordship seems to be no happier in answering other's objections, than in urging his own proofs. "You will say (continues he) why did not Jacob foretell also the continuance of the Sceptre of Benjamin? For the tribe of Benjamin run the same fortune with that of Judah: they went together into captivity: they returned home together; and were both in Being when Shiloh came<sup>f</sup>."

Upon my word, a shrewd objection. Let us see how his Lordship quits his hands of it. His first answer is,—*That from the division of the Kingdom after the death of Solomon, the tribe of Benjamin and the remnant of Israel, that is, part of all*



*the other tribes, ADHERED TO JUDAH AS THEIR HEAD* \*.

Here his Lordship seems fairly to have given up the Cause; his answer proving, in so many words, that *Judah's Sceptre* was not *tribal*, but *civil*. Let us examine it step by step. *Benjamin and the remnants of all the other tribes adhered to Judah as their head.* Now such an adherence can be no other than an acknowledgement of a *Civil Sceptre* in Judah. Yet his Lordship gives this as a reason why the continuance of Judah's Sceptre is foretold, and not Benjamin's. Therefore the Sceptre, whose continuance is foretold, was a *civil*, not a *tribal*, Sceptre, even on his own principles. If this needed a support, the words of the Prophecy afford it amply: his Lordship says, that *Benjamin and the remnants of all the other tribes adhered to Judah as their HEAD*; and *this adherence*, Jacob foretells—*Thy Father's children shall FALL DOWN before thee.*

Supposing therefore that this Sceptre of Judah were of the *civil* kind, his Lordship, it must be owned, has given a very satisfactory reason why Benjamin's *tribal* Sceptre was not mentioned. But if both were *tribal* Sceptres, the *continuance* of Benjamin's had as good a claim to the Prophet's notice (for any thing the Bishop has shewn to the contrary) as Judah's. Since, as *Tribes*, they both continued to exist, and to exist distinct.

His second answer to the Objection seems as little satisfactory as the first—*Though the continuance of*

*the SCEPTRE of Benjamin is not foretold, yet the continuance of the tribe or PEOPLE of Benjamin is distinctly foretold<sup>b</sup>. Would you desire a more conclusive argument against his own notion of a tribal Sceptre? If this prophetic Sceptre of Judah was a civil one, there is a very good reason why the continuance of the people, and not of the Sceptre of Benjamin should be foretold; because what Judah and Benjamin had in common was their continuing to exist as distinct tribes; the Sceptre being peculiar to the first: But if a tribal Sceptre be the subject of the Prophecy concerning Judah, then no possible reason can be assigned why the continuance of Benjamin's Sceptre should not be honoured with the divine notice as well as Judah's; since his Lordship assures us—*they both run the same fortune; they went together into captivity; they returned together to Judea; and were both in being when Shiloh came. And while a Tribe continues distinct, a tribal Sceptre continues with it; just as the head of a family exists so long as there is a family to govern.**

All this considered, his Lordship, in my humble opinion, had done well not to load himself with more than he had occasion to carry: especially as he had so little to answer for, in the success of this hypothesis; for he tells us at the end of his DISSERTATION, *that he has nothing more to add, but to acquaint the reader that the interpretation of Jacob's Prophecy now advanced, was not a mere invention of his own; that it was, as to the main point, the same with that which is the fourth in HUETIUS, and by him rejected, but for such reasons as had been fully obviated in this dissertation.—That it was the same*

<sup>b</sup> Page 356.



which JUNIUS and TREMELLIUS, and our own learned Countryman, AINSWORTH, had espoused; and which not many years ago was revived and improved by Mr. JONCOURT<sup>1</sup>.

Now, from what hath been said it appears, that of all the three branches, into which the common interpretation spreads, though they be equally weak, the last betrays its weakness most. But, what is of principal consideration, it is, of all the three, least suitable to the DIGNITY OF PROPHECY; the whole body of which has a perpetual reference to one or other of the great parts of the Dispensation of Grace. Now the first branch refers with suitable dignity to a whole People at large: the second to the same People under the Government of one certain line: while the third concerns only the fortunes of a single Tribe, and under a Family-idea.

The common interpretation therefore being shewn so very exceptionable in all its branches, what remains for us to conclude but that the true and real meaning of the *Sceptre of Judah* is that THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT which God, by the vicegerency of Judges, Kings, and Rulers exercised over the Jewish nation? We have shewn from various considerations of weight, that this THEOCRACY, which was instituted by the ministry of Moses, continued over that People till the coming of Shiloh or Christ; THAT PROPHECY like unto Moses whom God had promised to raise up. And to support what hath been urged from reason, to illustrate this important truth, we have here a Prophetic declaration enouncing the same thing,—

<sup>1</sup> Page 358.



*the sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come:* Shiloh is Christ. Now Christ is not the Successor of those VICEGERENTS of the Jewish State, but of God himself, the KING of the Jews. The Sceptre therefore which descends to him, thro' the hands of those vicegerents, is not merely a CIVIL, but a THEOCRATIC Sceptre. This, at the same time, explains the Evangelic doctrine of CHRIST'S KINGDOM, arising out of the *Theocracy* or *Kingdom of God*. Hence the distinction in that famous declaration of Christ, so much abused to factious and party purposes, that HIS KINGDOM WAS NOT OF THIS WORLD: The Theocracy which was administered over the Jews only, and in a carnal manner, was a *Kingdom of this world*: but when transferred to Shiloh, and extended over all mankind, and administered in a spiritual manner, it became a *Kingdom not of this world*. And the making the Sceptre of Judah neither Tribal, nor MERELY Civil, but properly *Theocratic*, clears the Prophecy from those insuperable difficulties which render all the other interpretations hurtful or dishonourable to the Prophetic system in general.

These are the superior advantages of the sense I have here endeavoured to establish. Nor are these all the advantages. The Prophecy is seen to embrace a much nobler object than was imagined. It was supposed to relate only to the fortunes of the *Jewish Oeconomy*, and we find it extends itself to the *whole Dispensation of Grace*. It was considered but as a simple PROPHECY, while it had the dignity of a REVELATION. It was mistaken for the *species*, when it is indeed, of the *genus*.

But to all this an *Answerer* may reply. 1.  
 " That, as we admit the THEOCRACY to be a King-

dom of this World, the same objection will lie as well against the CONTINUANCE or duration of a *Theocratic* Sceptre as of a mere *Civil* one." But here we must distinguish. The Theocracy was indeed carnal in its *administration*, but in its *original* it was Divine. Therefore, as where the subject is of the *continuance* of a mere *civil* Sceptre, we cannot but understand the *continuance of its administration*, because the administration is inseparable from the existence; so where the subject is of the continuance of a *Theocratic* Sceptre, we must understand that continuance to consist in its remaining unrevoked, since what is of divine original exists, independently of its being actually administered; it exists till it be formally abrogated. This difference is evident from the nature of things. Forms of Government ordained by Men cease when Men no longer administer them; because, in the non-administration of them, they are naturally supposed to revoke what they had ordained: But men's ceasing to administer (whether by choice or force) a Form of Government given by God, does not, (on any rules of logic or ideas of nature) imply God's revocation of that form of Government.

Again, we must remember what has been said of the effect and consequence of a THEOCRACY. It not only *united*, but *incorporated* the two Societies, civil and religious, into One. And this incorporated body of the Jewish State went by the name of THE LAW. Now under that part of the Law which more intimately regarded Religion, the Jews always lived FREE till the publication of the Gospel; though the other part of it, regarding the sovereign administration of civil policy and justice, they had lost from the time of Pompey. For a  
power

power precariously enjoyed, and ready to be abolished at the nod of a Conqueror, can never be called *Sovereign* (which implies the being free and independant) without the worst abuse of words, which is, the quibbling upon them. So that a Sovereignty in this Theocracy was still administered to the last, tho' in part. However this partial exercise was consentaneous to the System on which this Theocracy was dispensed; its Administration being ordained to have a gradual decline. The Jews, for their transgressions, being first of all deprived of that natural effect of Theocratic rule, the *extraordinary providence*: and then, for their incorrigible manners, further punished by an infringement of their civil sovereignty: but still the Theocracy, as to that more essential, the Religious part, remained unurt till the coming of Christ: And let it be observed, that it was this part in particular which was to be assigned over to him, from the Father. Thus, as I said before, this is not so properly a *prediction* of human events, as a *revelation* concerning the course of God's Dispensation.

2. Secondly it hath been objected <sup>40</sup> that according to the sense here put upon the *Scripture*, it should have been said—*the Scripture shall not depart from JEHOVAH* instead of *JUDAH*.<sup>41</sup> But such Objectors do not advert, that the Theocracy was administered by Vicegerents of *JUDAH*. And this likewise will account for the expression of a *Law-giver* between his feet.

3. Lastly it may be said, <sup>42</sup> That by this interpretation of the *Scripture* of *Judah* we deprive the Prophecy of one principal part of the information it was supposed to give, namely, the *time* of  
Christ's



Christ's advent, which the common interpretation is supposed to fix exactly." To this I answer, that Religion loses nothing by this change, since there are so many other Prophecies which point out the time with infinitely more precision. On the other hand, Religion gains much by it, in evading a number of objections, which had stigmatized the supposed Prediction with apparent marks of falsehood.

Thus we see this noble Prophecy, concerning the transfer of the Kingdom of God, to CHRIST, contains a matter of much greater dignity in itself, and of much greater moment for the support of CHRISTIANITY than could arise from the perplexed question about the reign of the Asmonean Princes, or the Continuance of the power of life and death amongst a tributary People. For, in predicting the *Abolition of the Law*, it supplies us with a new and excellent Argument for the Conversion of the Jewish People, fatally persuaded of its *eternal obligation*.

The Reasons of my being so particular concerning the duration of the THEOCRACY are various, and will be seen as occasion offers. Only the reader may here take notice, that it was necessary for the present purpose, to shew its continuance throughout the whole duration of the Republic, in order to vindicate the justice of those Laws all along in force, for the punishment of idolatrous Worship.

#### SECT. IV.

THUS far as to the nature and duration of the Mosaic Republic. Let us now see what PECULIAR CONSEQUENCES necessarily attended the admini-

administration of a THEOCRATIC form of Government.

One necessary consequence was an EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE. For the affairs of a People under a Theocracy, being administered by God as King; and his peculiar and immediate administration of human affairs being what we call an *extraordinary Providence*, it follows that an extraordinary Providence must needs be exercised over such a People. My meaning is, that if the Jews were indeed under a Theocracy, they were indeed under an extraordinary Providence: And if a Theocracy was only pretended, yet an extraordinary Providence must necessarily be pretended likewise. In a word, they must be either both true or both false, but still inseparable, in reality or idea. Nor does this at all contradict (as was suggested by Doctor SYKES even after he had seen his suggestion confuted) what I observe concerning the gradual decay and total extinction of the extraordinary Providence, while the Theocracy yet existed. For when I say *an extraordinary Providence was one necessary consequence of a Theocracy*, I can only mean that it was so in its original constitution, and in the order and nature of things: not that in this, which was matter of compact, the contravening acts of one Party might not make a separation. For, as this extraordinary Providence was (besides it being a mode of administration arising out of a Theocracy) a reward for obedience, it became liable to forfeiture by disobedience, tho' subjection to the Government still continued. I beg leave to illustrate this position both by a foreign and a domestic instance. The *Ærarii* in the Roman State were such who, for their crimes, were deprived of the right of Citizens: Yet these delinquents were obliged to  
pay



nothing to oppose but the *Determination* of God himself: who, by the mouth of one of his Prophets, declares, That the *Laws shall still oblige, tho' the Sanction be withdrawn*. "Ye pollute your selves" with your Idols, &c."—as the reader may find it transcribed just above. Here God declares he would withdraw that extraordinary Providence which naturally attended a THEOCRACY—I will not be enquired of by you. "Yet do not (says he) deceive your selves in an expectation that, because for your crimes I withdraw this sanction of my Law, the Law will oblige no longer,—and that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say we will be as the heathen: For, in order to the bringing about my own great purposes, I will still continue you a select and sequestered people—I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out from the Countries wherein you are scattered. And will still rule over you by my Law; now, in my wrath, as before in my mercy. With fury poured out I will rule over you, and bring you into the bond of the Covenant."

I suppose the thing that led our Doctor into this rash judgment, That *when the sanctions of a positive law are withdrawn, the obligation to the law ceases*, was his totally misunderstanding the principles of the best writers on the Law of Nature; Not by their fault, I dare assure the Reader.—*The Law of Nature* is written in the heart; but by Whom, is the question. And a question of much importance; for if not written by a competent Obliger it is no Law, to bind us. The enquirers therefore into this matter had no other way of coming to the Author of the Law but by considering the effects which the observance or inobservance of it would have on mankind. And they



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they found that the observance tended to the benefit of all, the inobservance to their destruction. They concluded therefore that it must needs have been given by God, as a Law to mankind; and these effects of its observance or inobservance they called the *sanction*. Hence it appears that the knowledge of our *obligation to the Law of nature* arises from the knowledge of the *sanction*. And, this sanction away, we had not been obliged, because we could never have discovered any real ground of obligation.

But the *positive Law of the Jews* was written in stone by the finger of God, in a visible manner; in which the senses of the People were appealed to, for the truth of the transaction. Here the knowledge of their obligation did not arise from their knowledge of the sanction, but from quite another thing, namely, the immediate knowledge they had by their senses, that God, their sovereign Lord and Master, gave them the Law. To enforce which, a *sanction* indeed, was added; but a sanction that added nothing to the obligation, nor consequently that took from it, when it was withdrawn.

This is a plain and clear state of the case. Yet so miserably has our Professor mistaken it, that for want of seeing on what principle it was which the writers on the Law of Nature proceeded, when they supposed *obligation to depend on the sanction*, he hath, of a particular case, made a general maxim: and in applying that maxim, he hath turned every thing topsy turvy, and given us just the reverse of the medal. He supposes the taking the sanction from the moral Law might not destroy the obligation, (which it certainly would) — *whatsoever*, says he, *might be the cause of God's moral Laws*; and

and that taking away the sanction from his positive Law would destroy the obligation, (which it certainly would not.)

What might further mislead our Professor (for the more such men read the less they understand) is the attribute the Roman Lawyers give to such civil Laws as are made without a penal sanction. These they are wont to call, *Leges imperfectæ*: And our great Civilian might believe that this assigned *imperfection* had a reference to the *obligation* they imposed, whereas it refers to the *efficacy* they were able to work. He should have known at least this first principle of Law, That it is the AUTHORITY of the Lawgiver, not the SANCTION he annexes to his Law, which makes it, I will not say, OPERATE *properly* (for this is nothing to the purpose) but makes it OBLIGE *really*, which is only to the purpose. In a word I know of nobody but HOBBS, besides this Doctor, who pretended to teach that the *obligation* to Laws depended upon their *sanction*: and this he did, because he derived all *right* and *wrong* from the Civil Magistrate: which, for ought I know, our learned Professor may do likewise, as only mistaking *right* and *wrong* (by a blunder like to the foregoing) for *good* and *evil*. Yet hath this grave man written most enormously both on LAWS and MORALS: And is indeed a great Writer, just as the mighty Gaint, Leon Gawer, was a great Builder; of whom the Monk of Chester so sweetly sings.

- “ The Founder of this City, as saith Polychronicon,
- “ Was Leon Gawer, a mighty strong Giant,
- “ Which builded CAVES and DUNGEONS many a one:
- “ No goodly Building, ne proper, ne pleasant.”

But

But our business at present is not with the actual administration of an extraordinary Providence, but with the Scripture representation of such an administration. And this the sacred history of the Jews attests in one uniform unvaried manner; as well by recording many instances of it in particular, as by constantly referring to it in general.

I. The first is in the History of MIRACLES. For an equal Providence being, by the nature of man's situation and affairs, necessarily administered partly by ordinary and partly by extraordinary means, these latter produce what we call *Miracles*, the subject of the sacred Writers their more peculiar regard. But I apprehend it would be thought presuming too much on the reader's patience, to expect his attention, while I set myself formally to prove that many *miracles* are related in the sacred history of the Israelites.

The simpler sort of Deists fairly confess that the Bible records the working of many Miracles, as appears even from the free names they give to those accounts. But there are refiners in Infidelity, such as SPINOZA and his mimic TOLAND; who acknowledge many of the facts recorded, but deny them to have been miraculous. These are to our purpose, and an Appeal to the common sense of Mankind is a sufficient answer to them all. And surely I should have done no more, had they not attempted to draw in to their Party much honefter Men than themselves. For such, therefore, even charity requires us to attempt some kind of defense.

The infamous *Spinoza* would persuade us that JOSEPHUS himself was as backward in the belief



of Miracles as any modern Pagan whatsoever. The handle, for his calumny, is <sup>1</sup> that Writer's relation of the *passage* of the *Red-sea*; which he compares to Alexander's thro' the *Pamphylian*, and which concludes with saying that *every Man may believe of it as he pleases*. No unusual way with this Historian of introducing or ending a miraculous Adventure. This hath indeed so libertine an air, that it hath betrayed some Believers into the same false judgment concerning Josephus; as if he afforded only a political or philosophical belief to these things; and gave a latitude to *those of his own Religion*, to think as they should see cause.

But here lies the difficulty; the Historian is every now and then putting on a very different aspect, and talking like a most determined Believer. Many are the places where he expresses the fullest and firmest assent to the *Divinity* of the *Mosaic Religion*, and to the *Truth* of the sacred

<sup>1</sup> — Scriptura de natura in genere quibusdam in locis affirmat eam fixum atque immutabilem ordinem servare. — Philosophus præterea in suo *Ecl.* clarissime docet nihil novi in natura contingere. — Hæc igitur in Scriptura expresse docentur, at nullibi, quod in natura aliquid contingat, quod ipsius legibus repugnet, aut quod ex iis nequeat sequi, adeoque neque etiam Scripturæ asserendum. — Ex quibus evidentissime sequitur miracula res naturales fuisse. — Attamen — de his unicuique, prout sibi melius esse sentiet, ad Dei cultum & religionem integro animo suscipiendum, liberum est existimare. Quod etiam JOSEPHUS SENTIT; sic enim in conclusione l. 2. *Antiq.* scribit, *Nullus vero discredat verbo miraculi, si antiquis hominibus, & malitia privatis via salutis liquet per mare facta, sive voluntate Dei, sive sponte revelata: dum & eis, qui cum Alexandro rege Macedoniae fuerunt olim, & antiquitus a resistentibus Pamphylicum mare divisum sit, & cum aliud iter non esset, transitum præbuit iis, volente Deo, per eum Persarum destruere principatum; & hoc consentitur omnes, qui actus Alexandri scripserunt, de his itaque, sicut PLACUERIT CUI LIBET, EXISTIMET.* Hæc sunt verba Josephi, ejusque DE FIDE MIRACULORUM JUDICIUM. *Tract. Theologico-Pol. C. vi. de Miraculis, p. 81, 82.*

Volumes. To mention only one or two, from a Book so known, and in a point so notorious. The following words of his Introduction (where he cannot possibly be considered as a translator, or relator only of what he found in the *sacred books*, from which he composed his history) these, I say, shew in how different a light he regarded *Moses* from all other Lawgivers: “And now I earnestly  
“intreat all who take these Volumes in hand, to  
“apply themselves with their whole faculties to the  
“contemplation of the Divine Nature, and then  
“turn to our LAWGIVER, and see whether he has  
“not made a representation of that Nature entirely  
“worthy of it; always assigning such Actions to  
“God, as become his excellence, and preserving  
“the high subject clear from any impure mixture  
“of FABLE. Though if we consider the distance  
“and antiquity of the Time he wrote in, we cannot but understand he was at full liberty to invent  
“and falsify at pleasure. For he lived full two  
“thousand years ago—A distance of Time to  
“which even the Poets dared not to carry up  
“the birth of their Gods, the actions of their  
“Heroes, or the establishment of their Laws.”  
Here, we see, the Historian expressly declares that MOSES in his writings employed *no degree of fiction*, so common in the practice of other ancient Lawgivers.

<sup>m</sup> “Ἡδη τοίνυν τὰς ἐντεταμένους τοῖς βιβλίοις παρακαλῶ τῶν γράμμι  
Θεῶν προσανέχεσθαι, καὶ δοκιμαζέειν τὰ κρείττεροι Νομοθέτην, εἰ τὴν το  
φύσιν αὐτῶ ἀξίως καὶ ἀδύνατον, καὶ τῇ δυνάμει περιεπείσας αὐτὸς τὰς πρά  
ξεις αὐτῶν, πᾶσιν κατασκευάζειν αὐτῶν φυλάξας λόγους τῆς παρ  
ἄλλους αἰσχυρήσαντο μυθολογίας· καίτοι οἱ, ὅσοι ἐπὶ μύθῳ χρόνῳ καὶ πα  
λαιότητι, πολλοὶ ἔχουσιν ἀδύνατον ψευδῶν πλάσματων. γέγονεν γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ  
δοσχυλίου, — ἐφ’ ὅσον πληθύνῃ αἰῶνας ὑπ’ αὐτῶν οἱ ποιηταὶ τὰς γενέσεις  
τῶν Θεῶν, μῦθους τὰς τῶν αἰθερῶν ἀρχαίους, ἢ τὸς νόμους ἀνενδύκῃ  
ἐτίμησαν. Vol. i. p. 3, 4.

And how *truly* divine he supposed the Law, appears from his observing, in the same place, that, while the *Jews* religiously observed its Precepts, all things went well and prosperously; but that, whenever they transgressed, then nothing but disasters followed. And lest any one should pretend, he meant no more than that national happiness was the natural consequence of adhering to the Laws of their Country; or that those Laws, being founded on Just and Right, God (whose general Providence it is agreed he acknowledged) would reward the virtuous observers, whatever were the original of such Laws; lest, I say, this should be pretended, he adds, that these disasters followed whenever they transgressed the Law, though in pursuit of things just and good. His words are these: "Upon the whole, what the Reader of this History may chiefly learn from it is this: That those, who obsequiously study the Will of God, and reverence his well established Laws, pass their lives in incredible prosperity; Happiness, the reward from God, ever attending their obedience. But in proportion to their neglect of these Laws, easy things become unsurmountable, and all their undertakings, *how justly soever directed*, end in incurable calamities". In which words, I take it for granted, he had the case of *Saul* particularly in his view. Again, so full was his persuasion of the Divinity of the Law, that he extols the *Jews* for suffering *Ptolemy*, the

<sup>a</sup> Τὸ Σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἀνὴρ ταύτης μάθῃ τῆς ἱστορίας, ἰδεῖν-  
σας αὐτὴν διδόνει, ὅτι μὲν τοῖς Θεῷ γνώμῃ καλοκολευθεοῖσι, καὶ τὰ κα-  
λῶς νομοθετηθεῖσα μὴ τοῖς μὴ καλῶς παραδιδόνειν, πάντα καλοῦνται πέρα  
πίστεως, καὶ γίρας εὐδαιμονίας προκαίεται παρὰ Θεῷ· καθ' ὅσον δ' αὖ  
ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς τέττων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμαλείας, ἀπορὰ μὲν γίνεσθαι τὰ πᾶντα,  
τρέπεται δ' εἰς Συμφορὰς ἀνηκέστους, ὅ, τι ποτ' αὖ, ὡς ἀγαθὸν δεῖν  
συνδάσσωσι. Vol. i. p. 3, 4.



son of *Lagus*, to take their City by storm on the seventh day, rather than violate the *Sabbatic* rest. *Agatharchides* (says he) *thinks this scruple worthy of contempt and laughter. But those who weigh it without prejudice, will see something truly great, and deserving of the highest commendations, in thus always preferring their Piety towards God, and adherence to his Law, before their own safety, or even the freedom of their Country.*

These passages, we see, have all the marks of a very zealous Believer. And what makes the greatest difficulty of all, is, that the very places in which the Historian uses such offensive latitude of expression are those where he employs his utmost endeavours to shew the real Divinity of his Religion; of which these *Miracles* are produced as evidence; an evidence he studiously seeks, and seems to dwell upon with pleasure.

This varying aspect, therefore, so indifferently assumed, creates all the embarrass. But would men only do in this case what they ought to do in all, when they pass their judgment on an ancient writing, that is, consider the *End*, and *Time*, and *Genius* of the Writer, together with the Character of those to whom the work is addressed; they would find *Josephus* to be indeed a steady Follower of the Law, and a firm Believer of its *miraculous* establishment; and, at the same time, discover the easy solution of all those untoward appearances which have brought his Religion into question.

° Τὸτο μὲν Ἀγαθαρχίδῃ καὶ ἀργύλῳ ἄξιον δοκεῖ τοῖς δὲ μὴ μετὰ δυσμενείας ἐξείλασσι φαίνεται μέγα καὶ πολλῶν ἄξιον ἐκωμῆσαι, εἰ καὶ Ζωσιγέας καὶ παλαιοὶ αἰθερωποὶ τινες νόμων φυλακῇ καὶ τὴν πρὸς Θεοῦ εὐσεβείαν αὐτὴν περιημῶσιν. Vol. ii. p. 458.

The case, with our Historian, stood thus: His Country was now in great distress; its Constitution overturned, and his Brethren in apparent danger of utter Extirpation. Calamities arising as much from the ill-will which the Heathens had entertained of their Religion<sup>p</sup> for its *unsociable* nature, as for their own turbulent and rebellious Carriage. This ill-will had been much increased by their superior Aversion to *Christianity*, considered by them as a Sect of *Judaism*; which had carried its insociability as far, and its pretensions much farther: so far as to insist on the necessity of all Mens submitting to its dominion, and renouncing their own Country Religions as the Impositions of Politicians, or the Inventions of evil Demons. This put the Heathen World into a flame, and produced those mad and wicked Persecutions that attended the first Propagation of the *Christian Faith*<sup>q</sup>. Such was the unfriendly state of things, when *Josephus* undertook an Apology for his Nation, in the HISTORY OF ITS ANTIQUITIES. Now as their conquerors' aversion to them, arose from the supposition that their Religion required the belief and obedience of all

<sup>p</sup> It was one of the principal Accusations which *Apion*, at that time, brought against the *Jews*, that they would not have Gods in common with other Nations; as we learn from *Josephus's* tract against him, τί δ' ἡμῶν ἔτι κατηγορεῖ το μὴ κοινὰς ἔχειν τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς. Vol. ii. p. 477, 478. And *Celsus* calls that famous Maxim, *A man cannot serve two Masters* (on which he supposed *Christians* founded the same principle) THE VOICE OF SEDITION when men are for breaking off all society and commerce with the rest of mankind. Εἰς ἑξῆς ἐκείνους ἡμᾶς εἰσάγει λόγους πρὸς τὴν ἐπιστολὴν αὐτῆς, θεολογῶν ἡμᾶς καὶ τοὺς δαίμονας διαρπαζέμεν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴσθη δαλιῦναι τὸν αὐτὸν παλαιοὺς κυρίους. Τὴτο δ, ὡς οἰεῖται ΣΤΑΣΕΩΣ ἵναί φωνῇ, τῶν (ὡς αὐτὸς νόμισεν) ἀποτυχισίων ἐαυτοῦ καὶ ἀπορρηγνύτων ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων. *Orig. cont. Cels.* p. 380.

<sup>q</sup> See the first volume, p. 291. Ed. 2.

Mankind (for they had, as we observed, confounded *Judaism* with *Christianity*) to wipe off this invidious imputation, we must conclude, would be ever in the Author's thoughts. So that when the course of his History leads him to speak of the effects of God's extraordinary Providence in his conduct of this People, he sometimes adds to his relation of a miraculous adventure, *but in this every Man may believe as he pleases*. A declaration merely to this effect: "The *Jewish* Religion was given by God for the use of his chosen People, therefore the Gentiles might believe as they pleased. The *Jews* did not pretend they should leave their own Country Religion to embrace theirs: That in this they were different from the *Christian* Sect, which required all Mankind to follow the Faith of a crucified Saviour under pain of total destruction". But that yet they were not  
"fo

\* In his Tract against *Apion* he has these remarkable words: *It is becoming Men of prudence and moderation carefully to observe their own Country Laws concerning Religious matters, and to avoid calumniating the customs of others. But this Man [Apion] abandoned his own Religion, and has since employed himself in inventing lies of ours.* Δὲ γὰρ τὰς εὐφρονείας τοῖς μὲν οἰκίαις νόμοις καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἀκριβῶς ἠμύνειν, τὸς δὲ τῶν ἄλλων μὴ λοιδορεῖν· ὃ δὲ τότες μὲν ἔθνη, τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ κατελύσατο. Vol. ii. p. 480. This was carrying his complaisance to the Gentiles extremely far. But the necessity was pressing; and he misses no opportunity of conciliating their good-will. Thus in his *Antiquities*, a work, as we observed, entirely apologetical, he tells the Reader, l. iii. c. 6. that the seven branches of the golden Candlestick signified the *seven Planets*. But in his *Wars of the Jews*, l. vii. c. 5. § 5. he assures us they signify the Reverence in which the *Jews* held the *Number Seven*. But, Allegory for Allegory, he thought, I suppose, one as good as the other, and therefore might be allowed to use what best served his occasions.

\* The *Jews* succeeded in their endeavours to distinguish Their case from the *Christians*. So that while the storm fell upon the latter,



“ so un hospitable, but that they received with open arms all who were willing to worship one God the Creator of the Universe.” Thus we see how it came to pass, (which was the main difficulty) that the places where he gives such a latitude of Belief, are those very places where he most labours to prove the Divinity of his Religion.

But this solution clears up all difficulties, and shews the Historian’s great consistency, as well as artful address, throughout the whole work. *Josephus* professes the most awful regard to the sacred Volumes; and yet, at the same time, takes such liberties of going from their authority, that it provoked the honest resentment of a late excellent Writer<sup>a</sup> to the following asperities: “ Nec levis sit suspicio illum Hebraice non scivisse, cum multis indiciis linguæ ejus imperitiam prodant. Quivis certe, cui vel mica salis est, sentiat illum Historias Sacras pro arbitrio interpolasse, demendo, addendo, immutando, ut Antiquitates suas ad Lectorum Græcorum & Romanorum palatum accommodaret.” But this license, though surely

latter, the other enjoyed a calm. As we may fully understand by that passage in St. Paul to the Galatians. *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.* c. vi. 12. On which Limborch observes very justly,—*Qui non zelo pietatis, aut pro lege Moïsis, moti id urgebant; sed tantum ut placerent Judæis; quia nempe videbant persecutiones quotidie magis magisque Christianis a Gentibus inferri, Judæos autem ab illis esse immunes, hac ratione eas, tanquam ipsi essent Judæi, studuerunt declinare.* *Amic. Collatio*, p. 164.

<sup>a</sup> — ἐν τῷ πο μόνον εἶναι κοινόν, εἰ βόλονται, πρὸς αὐτὸς καὶ πᾶσι ἀνθρώποις, ἀφικυμένους εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν σίβην τὸν Θεόν. Vol. i. p. 556.

<sup>b</sup> Bishop Hare.

to be condemned, was however something more legitimate and sober than is generally supposed. His deviations from Scripture being in those places *only*, where an exact adherence to it would have increased that general aversion to his Nation, whose effects were at that time so much to be dreaded, either as exposing the *perverse nature* of the People, or the *unsociable genius* of their Religion. To give an instance or two of each:

1. The *murmuring* of the *Israelites*, for *bread and flesh* in the Wilderness, is represented in Scripture, and justly <sup>x</sup>, as an act of horrid ingratitude towards God. Yet *Josephus* makes *Moses* own they had reason for their complaints <sup>y</sup>. And in the execrable behaviour of the Men of *Gibeah* to the *Levite* and his wife, though Scripture expressly says they attempted a more unnatural crime than adultery, yet the Historian passes this over in silence, and makes all the personal outrage attempted, as well as committed, to be offered to the woman <sup>z</sup>. The Reader will now easily account for what Mr. *Whiston* could not, his Author's omission of the story of the *golden Calf* <sup>a</sup>. For this was so amazing  
a per-

<sup>x</sup> Exod. xvi.

<sup>y</sup> ὡς αὐτὸν δὲ ἐν ἀνάγκῃ αὐτῶς διὰ τῆς ἀνάγκης τὸ τοιοῦτον ποιεῖν. *Antiq.*  
*Jud.* l. iii. c. i. § 5.

<sup>z</sup> *Antiq. Jud.* l. v. c. 2. § 8.

<sup>a</sup> "There is, amongst many other things that *Josephus's* copy appears to want, one omission of so important a nature — the heinous Sin of the golden Calf. — What makes it stranger is this, that *Josephus's* account is not only negative, by a bare omission, but positive, by affording an exact coherence without it, nay such a coherence as is plainly inconsistent with it. And what still makes it more surprising is, that *Josephus*



a perversity, at that juncture, that it must have made the very *Pagans* themselves ashamed of their *Jewish* brethren in idolatry.

2. Again, we are told in Scripture, that when the *Cutheans*, or *Samaritans*, heard that the *Jews*, who were returned from the Captivity, were rebuilding the Temple, they came and desired to be partners in the work, and joint Worshipers of the God for whom it was erected; to which the *Jews* gave this round reply: *You have nothing to do with us, to build an House unto our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the King of Persia hath commanded us*<sup>b</sup>. And *Nehemiah*, on the same occasion, gave them a still rougher answer: *The God of Heaven he will prosper us, therefore we his Servants will arise and build: but you have no Portion, nor Right, nor Memorial in Jerusalem*<sup>c</sup>. This was a tender place: it was touching upon the very sore, in an express declaration of the *Unsociableness* complained of. The story therefore, we may be sure, was to be softened before the Gentiles were to be

<sup>a</sup> *Josephus* frequently professes, neither to add to nor to take away "from the sacred Books." *Dissert.* II. p. xlv. Some other Liberties, which *Josephus* took with Scripture for the end above explained, made this learned Writer conclude that the Historian had an earlier and more uncorrupt copy of the Old Testament than any we now have: for that his accounts are more exact, consistent, and agreeable with Chronology, with natural Religion, and with one another. p. xxxv. Yet, after all, the fatal omission of the golden Calf brings him to confess, that *Josephus's* copy appears to want many things which are in ours. p. xlv. Thus sorely distressed is this good man in the support of a wild extravagant hypothesis; while every one else sees that all the omissions and alterations (which sometimes make his copy good, sometimes bad) were designed deviations from the sacred Volumes to conciliate the good-will of his masters.

<sup>b</sup> EZRA, iv. 3.

<sup>c</sup> NEH. ii. 20.



intrusted with it. Accordingly, *Josephus* makes them speak in these obliging terms: *That they could not possibly admit them as partners in the work; for that the command to build the Temple was directed to them first by Cyrus, and now by Darius: That indeed they were at liberty to worship along with them: and that this was the only Community, in religious matters, that they could enter into with them, and which they would do with as many of the rest of Mankind, as were willing to come up to the Temple to adore the God of Heaven<sup>a</sup>.* The reason the *Scripture Jews* give for the refusal of the offer to be joint partners with them in their work and worship is, that it was a Temple built in the *Land of Israel*, and to the honour of the *God of Israel*. The reason *Josephus's Jews* give for their refusal is obedience to the King of Persia: else, as for community of worship, they were very ready to receive them.

And now was not that a wise ° project which proposed reforming the *sacred Text* by the Writings of *Josephus*?

But this Explanation will enable us to conclude with certainty against that *spurious* passage concerning CHRIST. I think I have already offered one demonstrative argument against it<sup>f</sup>. And I suppose, the many marks of forgery are so glaring, that most men would be willing to give

<sup>a</sup> — ἔφασαν, “ τῆς μὲν οἰκοδομίας αὐτῆς ἀδελφικὸν ἔχει κοινωνίην. αὐτῶν περιεσχεθῆναι καὶ σκευάζειν τὸν ναόν, κατέστηκεν μὲν ὑπὸ Κύρου, νῦν δὲ ὑπὸ Δαρείου· προσκυνεῖν δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐφίεται· καὶ τὸτο μόνον ἔστι κοινωνία, εἰ βέλοισιαι, πρὸς αὐτὸς καὶ πᾶσι ἀνθρώποις, ἀφικνεσθῆναι εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν εὐσεβεῖν τὸν Θεόν. Vol. i. p. 556.

<sup>f</sup> Mr. Whiston's.

<sup>f</sup> See vol. i.

it up, were *Josephus's* silence on so extraordinary an occasion but easy to be accounted for. Now we have so far laid open his conduct as to see, that the preaching up of CHRIST was an affair he would studiously decline. His great point, as we observed, was to reconcile the Gentiles to his Countrymen. But the *Pagan* aversion was greatly increased by the new Sect of *Christians*, sprung, as was well known, from the Country of *Judea*. It was therefore utterly destructive of his purpose to shew, as he must have done, in giving them an account of CHRIST, the close connexion between the two Religions. Of all dangerous subjects, therefore, *Josephus* would be careful to avoid this<sup>z</sup>. So that (certain as I am of the Writer's purpose, and not ignorant of the liberty he took even with the sacred Records, when it served his ends, of adding and omitting at pleasure) I should have been as much surpris'd to have found the *History* of JESUS in his Works as others are to be told that it is not there. This too will equally well account for his omission of Herod's slaughter of the Children at Bethlehem, which Scaliger so much wondered at<sup>h</sup>; which Collins so much triumphed in<sup>i</sup>; and for the sake of which, our

<sup>z</sup> " La plus forte preuve qu'on ait, pour soutenir que le passage en question, où il est parlé de JESUS CHRIST, est de *Joseph*, c'est qu'il n'est pas croyable, qu'il n'ait rien dit de JESUS CHRIST. Photius fournit une réponse à ce raisonnement, en parlant de *Juste de Tiberide*, qui a écrit l' *Histoire des Juifs* en Grec, et qui vivoit du tems de *Joseph*, avec qui il a eû de grands demeurez. *Juste de Tiberide*, dit Photius n'a point parlé de JESUS CHRIST parce qu'il étoit Juif de Nation et de Religion." *P. Simon Bibl. Crit.* v. 2. p. 41.

<sup>h</sup> *Animad. in Chron. Eusebii.*  
*Prophecy considered.*

<sup>i</sup> *Scheme of literal*



Whitby seemed ready to give up the truth of the story<sup>k</sup>.

Thus did this excellent Writer out of extreme love to his Country (the most pardonable however of all human frailties) make too free with Truth and Scripture; though most zealously attached to the Religion of his Forefathers: as those Men generally are who love their Country best. And a Jew he strictly was, of a very different Stamp too, from that poor paltry Mimic of the Greek Sophists, *Philo*<sup>l</sup>. Of whom his Master *Plato* would have said, what *Josephus* tells us *Aristotle* did say, of one of his Jewish Acquaintance, A GREEK HE WAS, AND NOT IN SPEECH ONLY, BUT IN SOUL LIKEWISE<sup>m</sup>.

I judged it of importance to set this matter in a true light: Because many, I supposed, would think it a fair prejudice against the Divinity of the *Mosaic* Religion, had a person, so eminent amongst his Countrymen while the Republic was yet existing, and of so learned an age; so conversant in the Jewish Records, and so skilled in the best *Grecian* Literature; had such a one afforded only a political or philosophic Faith to the sacred Volumes. But then it will follow on the other hand, that the sincere *Belief* of one, so circumstanced, will be as fair a prejudice in its favour.

<sup>k</sup> *Comment, on the New Testament.*

<sup>l</sup> *Philo*, in his life of *Moses*, brings in the Egyptian Priests reasoning on the *Platonic* principles, concerning the soul that informed *Moses's* body; which is altogether as well judged, as if a modern Writer of the life of *Ptolemy* the Astronomer should bring him in explaining *Sir Isaac Newton's Principia*.

<sup>m</sup> Ἕλληνας ἦν, ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ ΨΥΧῃ.



Not that I am over fond of this kind of evidence, in matters where every one is obliged to judge for himself; and consequently, where every one, on a due application to the subject, is capable of judging. Much less would I lay great weight on the opinions of Men out of their own Profession, however eminent in any other. What is it to Truth, for instance, what a Courtier judges of a Church; a Politician of Conscience; or a Geometer, grown gray in *Demonstration*, of *moral Evidence*? To go on:

MIRACLES, therefore, as they are recorded to be continued through so large a period of this Republic, I give for one proof that the Scriptures have represented the Israelites as living under an extraordinary Providence. I say, as they are recorded to be so *continued*: For when miracles are only given at the first propagation of a Religion, (as of the Christian) they are to be no otherwise esteemed of, than as the Credentials of a new Revelation: These being like the Cloud which conducted the Israelites in their journeyings in the wilderness; the other like the same Cloud which abode upon the Mercy-seat: These like the Manna rained down from heaven only for a present subsistence; the other like the same Manna preserved uncorrupted in the Ark, to be a testimony to future ages.

II. This extraordinary Providence is represented as administered. 1. Over the State in general. 2. Over private Men in particular. And such a representation we should expect to find from the nature of the Republic; because, as an extraordinary Providence over the STATE necessarily follows God's being their TUTELARY DEITY; so an extra-

extraordinary Providence to PARTICULARS follows as necessarily from his being their SUPREME MAGISTRATE<sup>n</sup>.

As

<sup>n</sup> Here Dr. Sykes appears again upon the stage. "The Scripture representation of the Theocracy, as Mr. Warburton (says he) assures us, was, 1. *Over the State in general*: and 2. *Over private Men in particular*. I have no doubts about the former of these cases: For where a law was given by God, and he condescended to become King of a Nation, and a solemn Covenant was entered into by the People and by God, as their King, and where blessings were solemnly promised upon obedience to the Law, or curses were denounced upon disobedience: and this by one who was able to execute whatever he engaged; no doubt can be about the reciprocal obligations, or about God's performing his part of the obligation, since it is his property not to lie nor deceive. Temporal Rewards and Punishments being then the sanction of the Jewish Law, these must be dispensed by God so as to make the State happy and flourishing if they keep the Law, or else miserable if they disobeyed it. The Blessings and Curses were general and national, agreeable to the character of a King, and a legal Administration: such as related to them as a People; and not to particular persons." [Exam. of Mr. W's. account, &c. p. 186—7.]

Here, he assures us, *he has no doubts about the extraordinary Providence over the State in general*. And he tells us his reason, —Because *the Law was given by God, and he condescended to become the KING of the Nation, by a solemn Covenant made with the People*. Now if this very reason be found to hold equally strong for an extraordinary Providence over PARTICULARS, the point will be soon decided between us. Let me ask him then, what those reasons are whereby he infers that, from *God's becoming King of a Nation*, he must administer an extraordinary Providence over the *State in general*, which do not equally conclude for God's administering it over *Particulars*? Is not his inference founded upon this, That where God condescends to assume a *civil* character, he condescends to administer it in a *civil* manner? which is done by extending his care over the whole. If our Doctor should say, his inference is not thus founded; I must then beg leave to tell him, that he has no foundation at all to conclude from God's being *King*, that there was an extraordinary Providence exerted over the *State in general*. If he

As to this Providence over the State, it would be absurd to quote particular texts, when the

he confesses that it is thus founded ; then I infer, upon the same grounds, an extraordinary Providence over *Particulars*. For the justice of the Regal office is equally pledged to extend its care to *Particulars* as well as to the *general*. It may be asked then, what hindered our Doctor from seeing so self-evident a truth ? I reply, the mistake with which he first set out ; and which yet sticks to him. I have observed before, what confusion he ran into by not being able to distinguish between the *Form of Government* and the *Administration of it*. Here again he makes the same blind work, from not seeing the difference between a LEGISLATOR and a KING. — For where a LAW (says he) was given by God, and he condescended to become the KING of a Nation, &c. implying that in his opinion, the giving a Law, and the becoming a King, was one and the same thing. Hence it was, that as the Legislative power, in the institution of good Laws, extends its providence only over the State in general, he concluded, that the executive power, in the administration of those Laws, does no more. Which brings him to a conclusion altogether worthy both of himself and his premises. — *The Blessings and Curses* (says he) were general and national, agreeable to the character of a King and a legal Administration. — What ! Is it only agreeable to the character of a King and a legal Administration to take care of the State in general, and not of Particulars ? So, according to this new system of Policy, it is agreeable to the Constitution of England to fit out fleets, to protect the public from insults, and to enact Laws to encourage commerce ; but not to erect Courts of Equity, or to send about itinerant Judges. What makes his ignorance in this matter the more inexcusable is that I had pointed out to him this distinction, in the following passage ; the former part of which he has quoted, but dropt the latter, as if determined that neither himself nor his reader should be the better for it. My words are these : *It [the extraordinary Providence] is represented as administered, 1. Over the State in general. 2. Over private men in particular. And such a representation we should expect to find from the nature of the Republic ; BECAUSE AS AN EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE OVER THE STATE NECESSARILY FOLLOWS GOD'S BEING THEIR TUTELARY DEITY [in which capacity he gave them Laws] SO AN EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE TO PARTICULARS FOLLOWS AS NECESSARILY FROM HIS BEING THEIR SUPREME MAGISTRATE [in which capacity he administered them.]*



whole BIBLE is one continued history of it. Only it may not be amiss to observe, that from a passage in Ezekiel, where GOD says, *Because that Moab and Seir do say, BEHOLD THE HOUSE OF JUDAH IS LIKE UNTO ALL THE HEATHEN*<sup>o</sup>, it appears the Jews had boasted, and the Gentiles, till then, had acknowledged, that they were under an extraordinary Providence. As this therefore is so plain, I shall not hazard the obscuring it by many words; but go on to shew, that Scripture represents this Providence as administered likewise to Particulars.

In the Dedication of the first Temple, SOLOMON addresses his Prayer to GOD, that the Covenant between him and the People might remain for ever firm and inviolate, and the old Oeconomy be still continued. And after having enumerated divers parts of it, he proceeds in this manner: “ When  
 “ the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain,  
 “ because they have sinned against thee; yet if  
 “ they pray towards this Place, and confess thy  
 “ name, and turn from their sin when thou dost  
 “ afflict them: Then hear thou from heaven, and  
 “ forgive the sin of thy SERVANTS, and of thy  
 “ PEOPLE ISRAEL, when thou hast taught them  
 “ the good way, wherein they should walk; and  
 “ send rain upon the Land, which thou hast  
 “ given unto thy People for an inheritance. If  
 “ there be dearth in the Land, if there be pesti-  
 “ lence, if there be blasting or mildew, locust or  
 “ caterpillers; if their enemies besiege them in  
 “ the cities of their Land; whatsoever sore, or  
 “ whatsoever sickness there be: Then what prayer  
 “ or what supplication shall be made of ANY

<sup>o</sup> Chap. xxv. ver. 3.

“MAN, or of all thy PEOPLE ISRAEL, *when*  
 “EVERY ONE *shall know his own sore, and his own*  
 “grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this  
 “house; then hear thou from heaven and for-  
 “give, and RENDER UNTO EVERY MAN accord-  
 “ing unto all his ways, whose heart thou know-  
 “est.” Solomon in this petition, which, with  
 respect to the given *Covenant*, we might properly  
 call a PETITION OF RIGHTS, speaks the language  
 of one who extended the temporal sanctions of the  
 Law to PARTICULARS and INDIVIDUALS. For he  
 desires God, according to the terms of the Cove-  
 nant, to render unto *every man according to all his*  
*ways*. But when is it that he prays for the exertion  
 of this extraordinary providence to particulars? At  
 the very time when it is administering to the state  
 in general.—*If there be dearth in the land, if there*  
*be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locust or*  
*caterpillars, if their enemies besiege them, &c.* The  
 necessary consequence is, that as sure as Solomon  
 believed an extraordinary Providence exercised to  
 the State in general, so surely did he believe it

P 2 CHRON. vi. 28. & *seq.* To this it has been objected,  
 “That Solomon here prays for scarce so much in behalf of  
 “his own People, as he doth ver. 32. for every *stranger* that  
 “shall come and worship in the Temple.” But the Objector  
 should have observed that there is this difference,—the prayer  
 for the Israelites was founded on a Covenant; the prayer for the  
 Stranger, on no Covenant. That for the Israelites begins thus,  
*O Lord God of Israel there is no God like thee, which KEEPETH*  
*COVENANT*—and as he proceeds, the reason of his petition all  
 along goes upon their being possessors of the *promised Land*, the  
 great object of the Covenant, ver. 25-27-31. But the prayer for  
 the Stranger, ver. 32. is founded altogether on another principle,  
 namely, for the sake of God’s glory amongst the heathen.  
*Moreover concerning the Stranger* [words implying a new consi-  
 deration] *if they come and pray in this house, then hear from the*  
*heaven*—THAT ALL PEOPLE OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW  
 THY NAME AND FEAR THEE.—

VI exercised

exercised to individuals in particular. The Psalmist bears his testimony to the same Oeconomy: *I have been young* (says he) *and now am old: yet have I not seen the Righteous forefaken, nor his seed begging their bread*<sup>a</sup>. God himself declares it, by the Prophet Isaiah: *Say ye to the Righteous that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him*<sup>b</sup>. And again: *He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, &c, he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure*<sup>c</sup>. And we learn, from a parabolical command in Ezekiel, how exactly these promises were fulfilled: “And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my Sanctuary;” &c.  
The

<sup>a</sup> PSAL. xxxvii. 25. But the whole book of Psalms is one continued declaration of the administration of an extraordinary Providence to particulars, in the exact distribution of rewards and punishments. See the *Argument of the D. L. fairly stated*, p. 57 to 75, where the learned Writer has evinced the truth in question beyond the possibility of a reply.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. iii. ver. 10, 11.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xxxiii. ver. 15, 16.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. ix. ver. 4—6. To this Testimony from Ezekiel, Dr. ~~Barrow~~ objects, that “It is but a parabolical command: and no  
U 2 “ argu-



The same Prophet in another place, alluding to Abraham's intercession for Sodom, declares from God,

" argument can be drawn from parables for an equal providence over particulars, but at most for a particular and peculiar Dispensation." *Defence*, p. 61. This is the pleasantest of Answerers.—If this *parabolical command* does not mean what itself says it does mean, namely, " that virtuous individuals should be distinguished from the wicked, in a general calamity ;" what then does it mean? Why, at most, but a *particular and peculiar Dispensation*. And in what, I pray you, does a *particular and peculiar Dispensation* consist, if not in a distinction between the virtuous and the wicked, in a general calamity? But he had some confused notion that there was a difference between a *parabolical* and a real representation: and therefore he makes it to consist in this, that *no argument can be drawn from the former*.—Now, if from Jesus's parable of the rebellious Husbandmen (who wounded their Lord's Servants and killed the Heir, and for their pains were ejected from their possessions, and the vineyard let to other Husbandmen) I should conclude, " that he meant the Jews, who had murdered the Prophets which were sent unto them, and were ready to murder the Messiah likewise, and that for this crime they should be deprived of the blessing of the Gospel, and the Gentiles received into the Kingdom of Christ, in their stead, I make no doubt but, if it served our Doctor's purpose of answering, he would reply, *It is but a parabolical tale, and no argument can be drawn from parables, of Christ's sufferings and the rejection of the Jews, &c. but, at most, that the Jews were rebels and murderers, and would be treated as such.*"

Another Answerer is yet more shameless. " As to the parabolical command in Ezekiel (says Dr. Rutterforth) the very same promises were exactly fulfilled to the Christians. *Rev. vii. 1--2--3.*"—If you ask *when, where, and how*, you would embarrass, but not disconcert him. Yet, as he assures us, these promises were exactly fulfilled to Christians, he must give us leave to assure him, that it could be only in a *spiritual sense*: for St. Paul tells us, that the Jews had the *promise of the life that now is*, and the Christians of *that which is to come*. I doubt then the learned Professor was a little disoriented when he called the *promises* in Ezekiel and in the Revelations, *the same*. There is a strange perversity in these men. The promises under the *Law* they tell us are to be understood *SPIRITUALLY*, and this, in order that they may bring Judaism to Christianity: But then, to bring Christianity back to Judaism, they tell

God, that when his judgments come out against the land of Judea, the Righteous, found in it, should save only themselves; which plainly shews a providence extending to particulars.—“ Son of man, “ when the land sinneth against me by trespassing “ grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand “ upon it, and will break the staff of the bread “ thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will “ cut off man and beast from it. Though these “ three men Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it “ they should deliver but their own souls by their “ righteousness, saith the Lord God.” Ch. xiv. 13—14. But God, by the Prophet *Amos*, describes this administration of Providence in the fullest manner: “ Also I have withholden the rain “ from you, when there were yet three months to “ the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, “ and caused it not to rain upon another city: one “ piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon “ it rained not, withered. So two or three cities “ wandered unto one city to drink water; but “ they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten “ you with blasting and mildew, &c.” And again: *Lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel amongst all Nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth*<sup>x</sup>.

tell us on the other hand, that the promises under the *Gospel* are to be understood CARNALLY. But what is to be expected, or rather what is not to be expected, from a man who dares to assert, that there was no more an extraordinary Providence under the Jewish than under the Christian Dispensation; in open defiance of the Prophets and the Apostles, of Moses and of Jesus Christ.

<sup>x</sup> Chap. iv. ver. 7—11.

<sup>\*</sup> Chap. ix. ver. 9.



These declarations of God's providence are so exactly correspondent to Solomon's petition; that they seem as it were the *FIAT* to it<sup>y</sup>.

Thus we see the Law, as well by its express declarations as by its essential nature and genius, extended its sanctions of temporal rewards and punishments as well to Particulars as to the General. And as in civil Government, universal practice shews the necessity of a more exact dispensation of punishment than of reward, so we may observe from the passages last quoted that the Mosaic Law had the same attention; which occasioned the Wise Man to say, *Behold the Righteous shall be recompensed in the Earth: MUCH MORE the Wicked and the Sinner*<sup>z</sup>.

The inspired writers of the NEW TESTAMENT give evidence to this dispensation of Providence under the OLD. The Author of the epistle to the Hebrews argues from it as a thing well known and generally allowed: *For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and EVERY TRANSGRESSION AND DISOBEDIENCE RECEIVED A JUST RECOMPENCE OF REWARD, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation*<sup>a</sup>?

<sup>y</sup> Yet Dr. Sykes scruples not to say, "The passage from "Amos does not prove an *equal* or *unequal* Providence, but a "peculiar interposition, OCCASIONALLY administered." Def. p. 61. As I would be willing that every thing of this learned Answerer's should be put to use, I would recommend this observation to the reader as a paraphrase on the words of the Apostle, where he says that, under the Mosaic Dispensation "the word spoken by Angels was STEDFAST, and EVERY transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward," Heb. ii. 2.

<sup>z</sup> PROV. xi. 31.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 2, 3.



St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, speaking of the advantages which Christianity had over Judaism, says: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by Faith into his Grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but WE GLORY IN TRIBULATION ALSO, knowing that Tribulation worketh patience<sup>b</sup>, &c.* Here St. Paul opposing the advantages which the Gentile Converts had by FAITH, to those which the Jews, in contempt to the Gentiles, gloried to have by the LAW, adds, in order to shew those advantages in their highest superiority, that the Christian Gentiles could glory even in that which was the very opprobrium of the Jews, namely *tribulation*. For the sanction of the Jewish Law being temporal rewards and punishments, administered by an equal providence; *Tribulation* was a punishment for crimes, and, consequently, an high opprobrium<sup>c</sup>. But the followers of Christ, who were taught, *that we must through much TRIBULATION enter into the kingdom of God<sup>d</sup>*, had the same reason to glory in the roughness of the road, as the ancient Agonistæ had in

<sup>b</sup> ROM. v. 1, & seq.

<sup>c</sup> To this Dr. Sykes replies, "The equal providence over the Jews by his own confession had ceased some hundred of years, and therefore at the writing of this epistle, *Tribulation* was deemed by no body more an opprobrium of the Jews, or a punishment of their crimes, than it was of other people." *Defence*, p. 62. This great Divine did not perceive that St. Paul is here speaking of the different *genius* of the two Religions, Judaism and Christianity, not of the *condition* of the two People at the time he wrote: and consequently, as what was once true would be always true, the Apostle considers the *nature* of the two Dispensations as invariable.

<sup>d</sup> ACTS xiv. 22.

*The Divine Legation*      BOOK V.

which procured them the victory. This with great address. But the Critics, who have supposed the Apostle's meaning, have supposed a way, that he here broke in upon the argument, with an idea foreign to the point in hand.

This will help us to explain an odd remark of the excellent Maimonides: *That their wise men talked of a thing which was NOT TO BE FOUND in the LAW, namely, that which some of them call the CHASTISEMENTS OF LOVE, by which they meant that TRIBULATIONS might befall a man without any precedent sin<sup>e</sup>, and only in order to multiply his reward. And that this was the very opinion of the Sect called Muatzal, of which, or in favour of which opinion, there is not one single word to be found in the Law<sup>f</sup>.* This seems to have perplexed our Rabbi; and with cause. He lived when his countrymen were under a common providence, and had the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, which, he took for granted, was always in the Jewish Œconomy. These things disabled him from seeing that — NO CHASTISEMENTS OF LOVE was a necessary consequence of temporal re-

<sup>e</sup> This explanation was necessary; For, another kind of chastisements of Love there was in the Law, namely, paternal chastisements. Thus Moses: *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.* DEUT. viii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Unum tamen occurrit in verbis sapientum nostrorum, quod NON INVENITUR IN LEGE; id nempe, quod quidam eorum dicunt CASTIGATIONES AMORIS. Juxta hanc enim sententiam possunt TRIBULATIONES alicui evenire sine precedente peccato, sed ut multiplicetur ejus Remuneratio. Atque hæc ipsissima est sententia Sectæ Muatzali, de qua, aut pro qua ne verbum quidem in Lege reperitur. *More Nervoeh, Buxtorfi*, p. 381.

wards



wards and punishments administered by an equal providence: And likewise that when this sanction ceased, and a future state was known, then CHASTISEMENTS OF LOVE became a necessary consequence.

But if by the LAW, Majmonides did (as the Jews frequently do) include the writings of the Prophets, then he was very much mistaken in saying there is not one word in it concerning the *chastisements of love*. For Zechariah, prophesying of a NEW Dispensation, describes this sort of *chastisements* in very express terms: "And I will bring the third part thro' the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name, and I will hear them." So admirably do all the parts of God's grand Œconomy support one another.

We have seen what testimonies their coeval writers afford of an extraordinary Providence. But we must not suppose the Jews always held the same language. The difference is great between the early and later Jews, even during the existence of the Republic. Take an instance from the Psalmist, and the writer of Ecclesiasticus. The former says, *I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging their bread*<sup>2</sup>. The latter, — *Look at the GENERATIONS OF OLD, and see: Did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded? Or did any abide in his Fear and was forsaken? Or whom did he ever despise that called upon him*<sup>3</sup>? The Psalmist living under an extraordinary Providence appeals to his

<sup>2</sup> PSAL. xxxvii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 10.



own times; the Author of Ecclesiasticus living when it was long ceased, appeals to former times. But as we have been told, that this talk of a particular Providence is only an Eastern Hyperbole, in which every thing is ascribed to God, I think it not improper to take notice here of one singular circumstance in favour of the Reporters.

We may observe then, that the spirit of *Gentilism* was always uniform; and, throughout its whole duration, had ever the same unvaried pretensions to divine Intercourse, supported by the same sort of Oracles and Divinations. But amongst the *Jews* matters were on another footing. After their perfect settlement, on their return from Captivity, (when we know from the course and progress of God's Oeconomy, that the extraordinary Providence was to cease) we hear no more of their pretences to it, though they now adhered more strictly than ever to the Religion of their forefathers. They made no claim, as we see by the excellent Writer of the first Book of *Maccabees*, either to *Prophets*, *Oracles*, or *extraordinary Dispensations*. When they write unto the *Lacedemonians*, for the renewal of their Alliance, they tell them, at the same time, that they need it not, FOR THAT THEY HAVE THE HOLY BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE IN THEIR HANDS TO COMFORT THEM<sup>1</sup>. Language very different from their forefathers', when God was wont to send immediate help from the Sanctuary. How ingenuously does the same Historian relate the misfortune of *Bethsura*, caused by the observance of the Sabbath Year<sup>m</sup>? A misfortune of which we have no instance before the Captivity; and therefore a plain evidence that the extraordinary Providence

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xii. ver. 9.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Macc. vi. 49.

was indeed withdrawn. Besides if we consider the nature of the *Religion*, the genius of the *People*, and the circumstances of the *Time*, we shall find, they all concurred to favour the continuance of a pretension to an extraordinary Providence, had it been only a pretension.

1. The *Mosaic Religion*, like the *Pagan*, had a public part, and therefore the *Jews* might, with the greatest ease, have still carried on the Superstition of *Oracles*, had their *Oracles* been indeed a superstition; especially as they were now become so closely attached to their Religion. For when did ever *Greece* or *Italy* confess that their *Oracles* were become dumb, 'till the Consulters had generally forsaken them, and the whole frame of their Religion was falling to pieces? Besides, the practice of this Superstition had been as easy as it was commodious; for the Oracular Voice was wont to come from the *Mercy-Seat* behind the *Veil*.

2. The genius of the *People* too would have contributed to the continuance of this claim. For some how or other, it was become their character to require a Sign<sup>n</sup>; and tho', now, really superstitious, yet the humour spent itself rather in telling lyes of former times<sup>o</sup>, than in inventing any of their own. This

<sup>a</sup> 1 COR. i. 22,

<sup>o</sup> The Writer of the *first Book of Maccabees* appears to have lived in the times he wrote of; and we find no wonders nor prodigies in his History. But a long time after comes the Author of the *second Book*, an Epitomizer of one *Jeson* of *Syrene*; and he largely supplies what he thought the other wanted. This Man is such a lover of prodigies, that, when he has made a monstrous lye, and so frightened himself at the size of it that he dare not tell it out, he insinuates it [as chap. xii. ver. 22. —



This, on a supposition of the human invention of their Law, is altogether unaccountable. But take the matter as we find it in their sacred Books, and nothing is more easy. For if they had indeed been long accustomed to a *miraculous* Dispensation, they would, ever after, be strongly disposed *to require a Sign*; but it would be only such a *Sign* as bore the evident marks of a Divinity; which not being to be had in human inventions, they would be kept safe from delusions, and made sensible of the difference of times: And such was, in fact, their case.

3. Add to all this, that the *time of the Maccabees* was the season of Enthusiasm, when that airy Spirit is at its height; after the national Genius, long sunk by oppression, begins to rise and recover itself to a vindication of public Liberty. And of this we have a signal instance in the person of *Judas Maccabeus* himself; who, in imitation of *Gideon*, would set upon an army of twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse, with only eight hundred straggling desperado's; which rash and fanatic attempt was followed with the fortune that might, at this time, have been expected.<sup>r</sup>—In such a season too, artful Leaders are most disposed to support themselves by inspirations; have most need of them; and are thought, by the People, most worthy to receive them.

There is the same difference between the Writers of the New Testament and of the Old, as between

ἐκ τῆς τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἱστορίας ἐπιφανίας, Chap. xv. ver. 27. τῇ τοῦ  
 οὐνοῦ ἐπιφανίᾳ.] Nay he even ventures at an apology for *lying Won-*  
*ders*, [Chap. xv. ver. 11.] and under this encouragement falls a  
 lying to some purpose, [Chap. xii. ver. 16.]

P. 1 Mac. ix. 6.

the



#### SECT. 4. of MOSES demonstrated. 301

the Writers of the several ages of the Old. The Apostles (who worked *Miracles* as well as Moses and the Prophets) represent the followers of CHRIST as under the same *common* Providence with the rest of mankind: Unlike in this, to the first propagators of the LAW, who always declared the Israelites to be under an *extraordinary* Providence.

From all this I conclude, that as amidst the concurrence of so many favourable circumstances, no such claim was made; but that, contrary to the universal practice of all false Religions, the *Jews* saw and owned a great change in the Divine Economy, that therefore their former pretensions to the peculiar protection of Heaven were TRUE.

But it hath been objected that the early sacred Writers themselves frequently speak of the *inequality* of Providence to *Particulars*<sup>1</sup>: and in such a manner as Men living under a common Providence are accustomed to speak. It is very true that these Writers do now and then give intimations of this *inequality*. And therefore, though we shall hereafter prove an extraordinary Providence to have been actually administered, in which, not only this objection will be seen to drop of itself, but the particular passages, on which it is founded, will be distinctly considered; yet, for the Reader's satisfaction, it may not be amiss to shew here, that these representations of *ine-*

<sup>1</sup> — Asaph de Dei providentia dabitavit, & fere a vera via deflexisset—Salomon etiam, cujus tempore res Judæorum in summo vigore erant, suspicatur omnia casu contingere—Denique omnibus fere prophetis hoc ipsum valde obscurum fuit, nempe quomodo ordo naturæ & hominum eventus cum conceptu quem de providentia Dei formaverant, possent convenire. — *Spinoza Theologico-Pol.* p. 73, 74.

quality are very consistent with that before given of the extraordinary Providence. We say therefore,

I. That when the Sacred Writers speak of the *inequalities* of Providence, and the unfit distribution of things, they often mean that state of it amongst their *Pagan* neighbours, and not in *Judea*: As particularly in the Book of *Psalms* and *Ecclesiastes*.\*

II. We sometimes find Men complaining of *inequalities* in events, which were indeed the effects of a most *equal* Providence. Such as the punishment of *Posterity* for the crimes of their *Fathers*; and of *Subjects* for their *Kings*. Of the first, the Prophet *Ezekiel* gives us an instance in the People's case: *What mean ye, that you use this Proverb concerning the Land of Israel, saying, The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the Childrens teeth are set on edge?*—Of the second, *David* gives it in his own; not duly attending to the justice of this proceeding, where he says, *But these Sheep, what have they done?* And that he was sometimes too hasty in judging of these matters appears from his own confession: *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches.—When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me: until I went into the Sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.—So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee*†. That is, I understood not the course of thy justice, till I had considered the way in which an equal Providence must necessarily be ad-

\* See Appendix.  
xxiv. 17.

† Chap. xviii. ver. 2.  
‡ PSALM lxxiii. 12—22.

† 2 SAM.

ministered

ministered under a *Theocracy*, and the consequences of such an Administration. For,

III. Even admitting the reality of an *equal* Providence to Particulars in the *Hebrew* State, the administration of it must needs be attended with such circumstances as sometimes to occasion those observations of *inequality*. For 1. it appears, from the reason of the thing, that this administration did not begin to be exerted in particular cases till the civil Laws of the Republic had failed of their efficacy. Thus where any crime, as for instance disobedience to Parents, was *public*, it became the object of the civil Tribunal, and is accordingly ordered to be punished by the Judge<sup>\*</sup>. But when *private* and secret, than it became the object of Divine vengeance<sup>†</sup>. Now the consequence of this was, that when the Laws were remissly or corruptly administered, *good* and *ill* would sometimes happen unequally to men. For we are not to suppose that Providence, in this case, generally, interfered till the corrupt administration itself, when ripe for vengeance, had been first punished. 2. In this extraordinary administration, one part of the wicked was sometimes suffered as a scourge to the other. 3. The extraordinary Providence to the State might sometimes clash with that to Particulars, as in the plague for numbering the people. 4. Sometimes the extraordinary Providence was suspended for a season to bring on a national repentance: But at the same time this suspension was publicly denounced<sup>‡</sup>. And a very severe punishment it was, as leaving a State which had not the sanction of a

\* EXOD. xxi. 15, and 17.

† DEUT. xxvii. 16. and

PROV. xxx. 17.

‡ ISAIAH iii. 5. Chap. lix. ver. 2.

Chap. lxiv. ver. 7.

future



future state of rewards and punishments in a very disconsolate condition. And this was what occasioned the complaints of the impatient *Jews*, after they had been so long accustomed to an extraordinary administration<sup>a</sup>.

IV. But the general and full solution of the difficulty is this, The common cause of these complaints arose from the GRADUAL WITHDRAWING the extraordinary Providence. Under the *Judges* it was perfectly equal. And during that period of the *Theocracy*, it is remarkable that we hear of no complaints. When the people had rebelliously demanded a king, and their folly was so far complied with, that God suffered the *Theocracy* to be administered by a *Viceroy*, there was then, as was fitting, a great abatement in the vigour of this extraordinary Providence; partly in natural consequence, God being now farther removed from the immediate administration; and partly in punishment of their rebellion. And soon after this it is that we first find them beginning to make their observations and complaints of *inequality*. From hence to the time of the *Captivity*, the extraordinary Providence kept gradually decaying, till on their full reestablishment, it intirely ceased<sup>b</sup>. For what

<sup>a</sup> IS. v. 19. JEREM. xvii. 15. AMOS, v. 18. ZEPH. i. 12. MALAC. ii. 17.

<sup>b</sup> I will only observe at present, what the least reflection on this matter so naturally suggests, that this complaint of *inequality* never could have come from good men, as it did even from *Jeremiah* himself, who thus expostulates with the Almighty: *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the Wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?* [Chap. xii. ver. 1.] It never, I say, could have come from such

what great reasons, besides punishment for their crimes; and what consequences it had on the religious sentiments of the People, will be occasionally explained as we go along.

But now, let it be observed, that tho' I have here accounted for the *appearances* of an unequal Providence, yet this is *ex abundanti*; the very nature of my general argument evincing, that there must needs have been an equal Providence actually administered: for a People in society, without both a future State and an equal Providence, could have no belief in the moral government of God: And under such circumstances, it hath been shewn, that they could not long subsist, but must fall back again into all the confusion of a savage state. We must conclude therefore, that what *appearances* soever there may be of inequality in the administration of Providence, in the early times of the Jewish Theocracy, they are *but appearances*: that is, nothing which can really affect such a mode of administration<sup>a</sup>. The Adversaries therefore of the

such men, had they been *at all acquainted* with the Doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments; or had they not been long accustomed to an extraordinary Providence.

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Chubb, in some or other of his Tracts, has, as I remember, made an unusual effort; an effort to be witty. He observes, that the Author of the *Divine Legation* has done the Unbeliever's business for him; "by proving that an equal Providence was *promised*; while the Bible shews that it was not *performed*." But he might have known, that the Author did not furnish Infidelity with this foolish objection; it lay open to them. And he might have seen, that the folly of it was here effectually exposed. However, Mr. Chubb was a very extraordinary personage; and might have said with the reasoning Rustic in Moliere — *Oui, si j'avois étudié j'aurois été songer a des choses ou l'on n'a jamais songé*. As it was, he did wonders.



the *Divine Legation*, such of them, I mean, who profess themselves Believers, should consider that, while they oppose the reality of an *extraordinary* Providence over the Jewish people, they are weakening the evidence for the miracles recorded in the Old Testament. But this is the least of their care. One of them with an assurance, that hath something in it of a prodigy, affirms, "that the Providence administered under the *Law* was exactly the same kind with that administered under the *Gospel*." How this could be the case without impeaching the veracity of God himself, as not making good his repeated engagements, this man would do well to consider before he becomes the scorn and contempt of Unbelievers. But as such sort of men bear worse the disgrace of folly than impiety, I shall consider this Portent on its ridiculous side only.

Temporal rewards and punishments administered by the hand of God, followed, as a consequence, from the Jewish Government's being *Theocratical*; and an *extraordinary* Providence followed, as a consequence, from the dispensation of temporal rewards and punishments. Yet here we have a Regius Professor of Divinity affirming, That both *temporal Sanctions* and an *extraordinary Providence* are administered under the *Gospel* in the very same manner they formerly were under the *Law*. In which it is difficult to determine what most to admire; his modesty or his wit. For if it does

He began with defending the reasonableness of Christianity, and carryed on his work so successfully, that, before he gave over, he had reasoned himself out of Religion.

Dr. Rutherford.

honour



honour to his wit to maintain conclusions destitute of their premisses, it as strongly recommends his modesty to contradict the whole tenour of the New Testament. But there is neither end nor measure to party-bigottry. Faustus, the Manichean, contended that the Jews and Christians got the doctrine of the one only God from the Gentiles. Is this a wilder fancy than what many modern Divines have asserted, that the Gentiles got the doctrine of future rewards and punishment from the Law of Moses? Or are either of these more extravagant than the folly I am going to expose, namely, That *the temporal sanctions of the Law are transferred into the Gospel*? Now, if you should ask whether the Gospel claimed to be a *Theocracy*; I suppose at first, they would say *no*; till they found the advantage you get over them by this answer. And then I make no doubt, they would as readily say, *yes*. For what should hinder them? Does the Gospel disclaim, in stronger terms, its being a TEMPORAL KINGDOM, when Christ says, *his Kingdom was not of this world*, than it disclaims TEMPORAL SANCTIONS, when it says *Yea, and all that will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution*<sup>c</sup>, or than it disclaims an extraordinary providence where it declares that the Jews had *the promise of the life that now is*, and the Christians of *that which is to come*<sup>d</sup>?

But not to stretch our conjectures to the lengths these men are disposed to go; let us consider how far they have already gone. They say *the temporal sanctions of the Law are transferred into the Gospel*: and they prove it by these two notable texts.

<sup>c</sup> 2 TIM. iii. 12.

<sup>d</sup> 1 TIM. iv. 8.

The first is of St. PAUL, "Children, obey  
 " your parents in all things: for this is right.  
 " *Honour thy Father and thy Mother* (which is  
 " the first commandment with promise) that it  
 " may be well with thee, and thou mayest live  
 " long on the earth<sup>1</sup>." All that I here find  
*transferred*, from the Law to the Gospel, are the  
*words* of the fifth Commandment. For the Apostle  
 having said, *Children, obey your parents in the Lord:*  
*for this is right*; he supports his exhortation by a  
 quotation from the Decalogue; just as any modern  
 preacher, but This, would do, without ever dream-  
 ing of *temporal sanctions* in the Gospel; the observa-  
 tion, the Apostle makes upon it being in these  
 words—*which is the first commandment with promise*;  
 as much as to say, "You may see, from this cir-  
 cumstance, how very acceptable the performance  
 of this duty is, to God:" The only inference  
 which common sense authorises us to draw from it  
 being what, in another place, he thus expresses,—  
*Godliness* [or the observance of God's commands]  
*is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the*  
*life that now is* [under the LAW] *and of that which*  
*is to come* [under the GOSPEL.]

The other colour for this clandestine *transfer* of  
*temporal sanctions*, is from St. PETER: "Who is  
 " he that will harm you, if you be followers of  
 " that which is good?" So says the Apostle; and  
 so too said his Master; to whose words Peter al-  
 ludes, *Fear not them which kill the body: but rather*  
*fear him which is able to destroy body and soul in Hell*<sup>2</sup>.  
 But as if the Apostle had it in his thoughts to guard  
 against this absurd vision of *temporal sanctions*, he

<sup>1</sup> 1 PH. vi. 2, 3.<sup>2</sup> 1 PET. iii. 13.<sup>3</sup> MATT. x. 28.  
immediately

immediately subjoins,—“ But, and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye.”

Our Doctor having so well made out this point, we need not wonder at his confidence, when he assures us, *that there is full as good evidence of an extraordinary providence under the christian Dispensation as under the Jewish.* This though the language of Toland, Tindal, Collins, and the whole tribe of Free-thinkers, yet comes so unexpected from a Regius Professor of Divinity, that we should be very careful not to mistake his meaning.

If, by *full as good*, he would insinuate that an *extraordinary providence* was administered under both Dispensations, I shall be in pain for his intellects ; if he would insinuate, that an *extraordinary providence* was administered in neither, I shall be in pain for his Professorship. But he is in pain for nothing ; as the reader may perceive by his manner of supporting this impertinent paradox. His proofs follow with equal ease and force.—*I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven*<sup>1</sup>.—*And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life*<sup>2</sup>.—*Take therefore no thought saying, What shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ? or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? for your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall*

<sup>1</sup> MATTH. xviii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> MATTH. xix. 29.



be added unto you<sup>1</sup>. And again, *If ye ask any thing in my name, I will give it*<sup>m</sup>.—"No more, my most wise Friend! Thou hast my wonder; that's enough. My understanding shall come after;" said, once on a time, a plain good man to a profound Philosopher like this.

Now not to repeat again the illogical bravado of taking and supporting a *conclusion* divorced from its *premises*; such as is the contending for temporal sanctions and an extraordinary providence where there was no Theocracy, from whence they could be derived; we have here a Professor of Divinity who has his elements of Scripture-interpretation yet to learn. The first rule of which is, 1. "That *all*, does not signify *all simply*, but *all of one kind*; and, of what kind, the context must direct us to determine." When therefore, the members of Christ's *spiritual Kingdom* are promised they shall obtain *all* they ask, this *all* must needs be confined to *things spiritual*. Now when here we find those, who are bid to leave their temporal possessions and propagate the Gospel, have the promise of a hundred fold, are we to seek for the performance, in Palestine, or in a *better Country*<sup>n</sup>? Again, Where under the *Law*, we read of *temporal Promises*, we read likewise that they were fulfilled. Where, under the *GOSPEL*, we read that *those who, for the sake of Christ, forsake houses, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, shall receive an hundred-fold*, What are we there to look for? For the good things of this world, which this sharp-sighted Doctor is so eager and intent to find?—Now admit

<sup>1</sup> MATTH. vi. 31, & seq.

<sup>m</sup> JOHN xiv. 14.

<sup>n</sup> HEB. xi. 16.

there might be no great inconvenience in receiving a hundred *houses* for one; would not a hundred *wives* a little embarrass his Professorship? And as to the *house and land*—Where did he learn that this was literally fulfilled, even to those who had the best title to them if they were literally promised, I mean the APOSTLES, yet these we always meet on foot; strangers upon earth; and without either house or home. He, who then passed for a learned Apostle, once at Rome, indeed, got a warm *house* over his head; yet let us not forget that it was but a *hired* one. Here, in this Capital of the World, he received all who came to him. But tho' a good Divine, as times then went, he never rose to a Regius Professorship.

The second elementary rule of interpretation is, "That all the promises of *extraordinary* blessings, made to the first propagators of the Gospel, are not to be understood as extending to their successors of all Ages, or to the Church in general." To apply this likewise to the thing in question. If it should be admitted that great *temporal blessings* were promised to the first disciples of Christ, it will not follow that their successors had a claim to them, any more than they had to their *spiritual gifts and graces*, such as the power of working miracles, prophesying, speaking with tongues, &c. Because, as divine Wisdom saw these latter to be necessary for the discharge of their peculiar function; so divine Goodness might be graciously pleased to bestow the Other on them, as the reward of their abundant Faith, and superior Courage in the day of trial, when the Powers of this world were bent on their destruction. But this (blessed be God) is neither the learned Professor's case, nor mine. The worst that has be-

fallen me in the defence of Religion is only the railings of the Vile and Impotent: and the worst that is likely to befall him is only the ridicule of all the rest. Happy had it been for himself and much happier for his hearers, had our Professor's modesty disposed him rather to seek instruction from those who have gone before, than to impart it to those who are to come after. HOOKER has so admirably exposed this very specific folly which our Doctor has run into, of arguing against his senses, in making the Dispensation of Providence under the *Mosaic* and *Christian* Oeconomies to be the same, that I cannot do him better service than to transcribe the words of that divine ornament of the English Priesthood.——“ Shall we then here-  
 “ upon ARGUE EVEN AGAINST OUR OWN EXPE-  
 “ RIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE? Shall we seek to  
 “ persuade men that, of necessity, it is with us as  
 “ it was with them, that because God is ours, in  
 “ all respects, as much as theirs, therefore, either  
 “ no such way of direction hath been at any time,  
 “ or if it have been, it doth *still continue* in the  
 “ Church? or if the same do not continue, that  
 “ yet it must be, at the least, supplied by some  
 “ such means as pleaseth us to account of equal  
 “ force? A more dutiful and religious way for us,  
 “ were to admire the Wisdom of God which  
 “ shineth in the beautiful variety of things, but  
 “ most in the manifold and yet harmonious dis-  
 “ similitude of those ways, whereby his Church  
 “ upon earth is guided from age to age through-  
 “ out all the generations of men °.”

But this was one of the charitable expedients  
 employed to set me right, and to prevent the dis-

° Eccl. Pol. b. iii. sec. 10.



grace of scribbling much to no purpose. However,  
 as in a Work of this nature, which partakes so  
 much of the History of the human mind, I may  
 be allowed occasionally, and as it falls in my way,  
 to give as well, examples of its more uncommon  
 degrees of depravity and folly, as of its improve-  
 ments and excellencies, I shall go on. My con-  
 stant friend Dr. Stebbing proceeds another way to  
 work, but all for the same good end. He desires  
 me and my reader to consider, " what it was that  
 " Moses undertook; and what was the true end of  
 " his Mission. It was to carry the children of Israel  
 " out of Egypt, and put them in possession of the  
 " Land of Canaan, in execution of the Covenant  
 " made with Abraham. The work in the very  
 " NATURE of it *required* the administration of an  
 " *extraordinary* Providence; of which it OUGHT  
 " THEREFORE TO BE PRESUMED that Moses had  
 " both the *assurance* and *experience*: otherwise he  
 " would have engaged in a very MAD undertak-  
 " ing, and the people would have been AS MAD  
 " in following him. THIS SHORT HINT POINTS  
 " OUT THE TRUE INTERNAL EVIDENCE of *Moses's*  
 " *Divine Legation*, and this evidence *has no sort of*  
 " *dependence* upon the belief or disbelief of the  
 " doctrine of a future state. For supposing (what  
 " is the truth) that the Israelites did believe it;  
 " what could this belief effect? It might carry  
 " them to Heaven, and would do so if they made  
 " a proper use of it, but it could not put them  
 " in possession of the Land of Canaan. Mr.  
 " Warburton therefore has plainly mistaken his  
 " point."

This intimation of my mistake is kind: and I  
 should have taken his *hint*, as *short* as it is, but  
 for the following reasons,

1. This

servation I supported by the case of Odin's followers, and Mahomet's; who, in the same circumstances of making conquests, and seeking new habitations, had this Doctrine sedulously inculcated to them, by their respective Leaders. And the Histories of both these Nations inform us, that nothing so much contributed to the rapidity of their successes as the enthusiasm which that Doctrine inspired.

And yet, to be sure, the Doctor never said a livelier thing, who is celebrated for saying many, than when he asked,—*What could this belief effect? It might carry them to Heaven; but it could not put them in possession of the Land of Canaan.* Now unluckily, like most of these witty things, when too nearly inspected, we find it to be just the reverse of the truth. The *belief* could never carry them to Heaven, and yet was abundantly sufficient, under such a leader as Moses, to put them in possession of the land of Canaan. The Arabians' belief of a future state could never, in the opinion at least of our orthodox Doctor, carry them to Heaven; yet he must allow it enabled them to take and keep possession of a great part of Europe and Asia. But the Doctor's head was running on the efficacy of the *Christian Faith*, when he talked of *belief carrying men to heaven*.—Yet who knows, but when he gave the early Jews the knowledge of a future state, he gave them the *Christian faith* into the bargain?

#### S E C T. V.

**T**HUS we see that an EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE WAS THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF A THEOCRACY; and that this Providence



dence is represented in Scripture to have been really administered. TEMPORAL REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS, therefore, (the effects of this providence) and *not future*, MUST NEEDS BE THE SANCTION of their Law and Religion.

Having thus prepared the ground, and laid the foundation, I go on to shew that future Rewards and Punishments, which COULD NOT BE THE SANCTION of the Mosaic Dispensation, WERE NOT TAUGHT in it at all: and that, in consequence of this Omission, the PEOPLE had not the doctrine of a future state for many ages. And here my arguments will be chiefly directed against the believing part of my Opponents; no Deist<sup>p</sup>, that I know of, ever pretending that the doctrine of a future state was to be found in the Law.

MOSES delivered to the Israelites a complete Digest of Law and Religion: but, to fit it to the nature of a Theocratic Government, he gave it perfectly incorporated. And, for the observance of the intire Institution, he added the sanction of rewards and punishments: both of which we have shewn to be necessary for the support of a Repub-

<sup>p</sup> The Atheist *Vanini*, indeed, seems to rank Moses in the number of those Politicians, who, he says, promised a *future state* that the cheat might never be found out. — *In unica naturæ lege, quam natura, quæ Deus est (est enim principium motui) in omnium gentium animis inscripsit. Cæteras vero leges non nisi figmenta & illusiones esse asseriebant, non a cacodæmone aliquo inductas fabulosum namque illorum genus dicitur a philosophis, sed a principibus ad subditorum pædagogiam excogitatas, & a sacrificulis ob honoris & auri aucupium confirmatas, non miraculis, sed scriptura, cujus nec originale ullibi adinvenitur, quæ miracula fœta recitet, & bonarum ac malarum actionum repositiones polliceatur, in futura tamen vita, ne fraus detegi possit.* — *De admirandis naturæ arcanis.*



lic: and yet, that civil Society, as such, can administer only one <sup>9</sup>.

Now in the Jewish Republic, both the rewards and punishments promised by heaven, were TEMPORAL only. Such as health, long life, peace, plenty, and dominion, &c. Diseases, immature death, war, famine, want, subjection, and captivity, &c. And in no one place of the Mosaic Institutes is there the least mention, or any intelligible hint, of the rewards and punishments of another life.

When SOLOMON had restored the integrity of Religion; and, to the regulated purity of Worship, had added the utmost magnificence; in his DEDICATION of the new-built Temple, he addresses a long prayer to the God of Israel, consisting of one solemn petition for the continuance of the OLD COVENANT made by the ministry of Moses. He gives an exact account of all its parts, and explains at large the SANCTION of the Jewish Law and Religion. And here, as in the writings of Moses, we find nothing but TEMPORAL rewards and punishments; without the least hint or intimation of a future state.

The holy PROPHETS speak of no other. Thus Isaiah: "Then shall he give the rain of thy seed that thou shalt sow the ground withal, and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous; and in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.—And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon

<sup>9</sup> i. e. Punishments. See the first vol. p. 16. 4th ed.

" every

“ every high hill, rivers and streams of water :.” And Jeremiah: “ I will surely consume them, “ faith the Lord; there shall be no grapes on the “ vine, nor figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf shall “ fade, and the things that I have given them “ shall pass away from them.—I will send serpents and cockatrices amongst you, which will “ not be charmed, and they shall bite you, faith “ the Lord :.” Nay so little known, in these times, was any other kind of rewards and punishments to the Jewish People, that, when the Prophets foretell that NEW Dispensation, by which, *life and immortality were brought to light*, they express even those future rewards and punishments under the image of the present. Thus Zechariah, prophesying of the times of CHRIST, describes the punishment attendant on a refusal of the terms of Grace, under the ideas of the Jewish OEconomy : “ And it shall be that who so will not *come up of* “ *all the families of the earth* unto Jerusalem, to “ worship the *King* the Lord of Hosts, even upon “ them SHALL BE NO RAIN.” I would have those men well consider this, who persist in thinking “ that the early Jews had the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, though Moses taught it not expressly to them;” and then tell me why Zechariah, when prophesying of the Gospel-times, should chuse to express these *future* rewards and punishments under the image of the *present*?

Indeed, were it not for the amazing prejudices which have obtained on this subject, a writer's pains to shew that a future state of rewards and

<sup>r</sup> Chap. xxx. ver 23, 25.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. viii. ver. 13, 17.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. xiv. ver. 17.

punishments”

punishments made no part of the Mosaic Dispensation, would appear as absurd to every intelligent reader, as his would be who should employ many formal arguments to prove that Sir Isaac Newton's *Theory of Light and Colours* is not to be found in Aristotle's books *de Cælo*, & *de Coloribus*. I will therefore for once presume so much on the privilege of Common Sense, as to suppose, the impartial reader may be now willing to confess, that the doctrine of Life and Immortality was not yet known to a people while they were *sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death* ; and go on to other matters that have more need to be explained.

## II.

I shall shew then, in the next place, that this OMISSION was not accidental ; or of a thing which Moses did not well understand : but that, on the contrary, it was a designed omission ; and of a thing well known by him to be of high importance to Society.

I. That the doctrine of a future state of Rewards and Punishments was studiously omitted, may appear from several circumstances in the book of Genesis. For the history of Moses may be divided into two periods ; from the Creation to his Mission ; and from his Mission to the delivering up his Command to Joshua : The first was written by him in quality of HISTORIAN ; the second, of LEGISLATOR ; in both of which he preserves an equal silence concerning the doctrine of a future state.

\* MATTH. iv. 16.



1. In the history of the *Fall of Man* it is to be observed, that he mentions only the instrument of the agent, the SERPENT; not the agent himself, the DEVIL: and the reason is plain; there was a close connection between that agency,—The spiritual effects of the Fall,—the work of Redemption,—and the doctrine of a future State. If you say, the connection was not so close but that the Agent might have been mentioned without any more of his history than the temptation to the *Fall*; I reply it is true it might; but not without danger of giving countenance to the impious doctrine of *Two Principles*, which at this time prevailed throughout the Pagan world. What but these important considerations could be the cause of the omission \*? when it is so evident that the knowledge of this grand enemy of our welfare would have been the likeliest cure of Pagan superstitions, as teaching men to esteem of Idolatry

\* The miserable efforts of these men to evade the force of a little plain sense is deplorable. "Moses (says one of them) could not omit the mention of the *Devil* for the reason given by the author of the D. L. because he mentions him expressly and represents him as the patron, if not as the author, of idolatry." Deut. xxvii. ver. 17. *Rutherford's Essay*, p. 294. — The words of Moses are these, — *They sacrificed to DEVILS, not to God; to Gods whom they knew not, to new Gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.* The Hebrew word here translated *Devils*, is *Schedim*, which the best interpreters tell us, has another signification. The true God being *Schaddei*, the *omnipotent and all sufficient*; the gentile Gods by a beautiful opposition, are called *Schedim*, *counterfeit Gods*. And the context, where they are called *new Gods*, shews this interpretation to be the true. But admit that, by *Schedim* is to be understood *evil spirits*: by these spirits are not meant fallen Angels, but the souls of wicked men. These were the *Demons* of Paganism; but the *Devils* discovered by Revelation have a different nature and original: Accordingly, the Septuagint, which took *Schedim* in the sense of the souls of wicked men, translates it by *δαίμονα*.

no otherwise than as a mere diabolical illusion. And in fact we find, that when the Israelites were taught, by the later Prophets, to consider it in this light, we hear no more of their Idolatries. Hence we see, that the folly of those who, with *Collins*, would have a mere serpent only to be understood, is just equal to theirs who, with the *Cabbalists*, would have that serpent a mere Allegory.

2. In the history of Enoch's translation <sup>y</sup> to Heaven <sup>z</sup>, there is so studied an obscurity that several of the Rabbins, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi, fond as they are of finding a future state in the Pentateuch, interpret this translation as only signifying an immature death. *And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.* How different from the other history of the translation of Elijah? "And it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into Heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal, &c.—And it came to pass as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up with a whirlwind into Heaven <sup>a</sup>." But the reason of this difference is evident: When the latter history was written, it was thought expedient to make a preparation for the dawning of a *future state* of reward and punishment, which in the time of Moses had been highly improper. The reflections of an eminent Critic on this occasion, will shew how little he penetrated into the true design of this Œconomy. "Mirum est Mosè rem tantam, si modo immortalem Henochum factum CREDIDIT, tam obiter, tamque

<sup>y</sup> GEN. v. 24.  
ii. 1, 11.

<sup>z</sup> HEB. xi. 5.

<sup>a</sup> 2 KINGS

" obscure,

“ obscure, quasi EAM LATERE VELLE, perstrinx-  
 “ iffe. Fortè cum hæc ex antiquissimis monumentis  
 “ exscriberet, nihil præter ea quæ nobis tradidit  
 “ invenit, quibus aliquid adjicere religio fuit<sup>b</sup>.”  
 For Moses both knew and *believed* the Immortality  
 of Enoch, and purposely obscured the fact, from  
 whence it might have been collected. But what is  
 most singular in this reflection is, that the learned  
 Commentator, to aggravate the obscurity, says it  
 is as obscure, as if he purposely designed to hide it,  
 supposing such a design to be the highest improb-  
 ability; which was indeed the fact, and is the  
 true solution of the difficulty.

3. In his history of the Patriarchs, he entirely  
 omits, or throws into shade, the accounts of those  
 Revelations, with which, as we learn from the  
 writers of the New Testament, some of them  
 were actually favoured, concerning the Redemp-  
 tion of mankind. Of these favours we shall give  
 ere long a great and noble instance, in the case of  
 ABRAHAM, who, as we are assured by JESUS him-  
 self, *rejoiced to see CHRIST's day, and saw it, and  
 was glad.*

From whence therefore could all this studied  
 caution arise, but to keep out of sight that doctrine,  
 which, for ends truly worthy of the divine Wis-  
 dom, he had omitted in his Institutes of Law and  
 Religion. This shews the weakness of that eva-  
 sion, which would reconcile the OMISSION, to the  
 People's KNOWLEDGE of the doctrine, by suppo-  
 sing they had been so well instructed by the Pa-  
 triarchs, that Moses had no occasion to say any  
 thing farther on that subject.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Clericum in GEN. v. 24.



Let me observe by the way, that these considerations are more than a thousand topical arguments to prove, that Moses was the real author of the book of Genesis. But the proof deduced therefrom will be drawn out and explained at large hereafter.

II. That the importance of this Doctrine to Society was well understood by Moses, may appear from a particular provision in his Institutes, (besides that general one of an extraordinary providence) evidently made to oppose to the inconvenient consequences of the OMISSION.

We have shewn at large, in the first volume, that under a common or unequal providence, civil Government could not be supported without a Religion teaching a future state of reward and punishment. And it is the great purpose of this work to prove, that the Mosaic Religion wanting that doctrine, the Jews must REALLY have enjoyed that equal providence, under which holy Scripture represents them to have lived: and then, no transgressor escaping punishment, nor any observer of the law missing his reward<sup>c</sup>, human affairs might be

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Sykes in disputing with me, as we have seen above, on this question, *Whether the extraordinary Providence was only over the State in general, or whether it extended to Particulars*, having sufficiently puzzled himself and his reader; To recover the ground he had lost, on a sudden changes the question, and now tells us, that it is, "*Whether an extraordinary Providence was administered to Particulars in such a manner that no transgressor of the Law escaped punishment, nor any observer of the Law missed his reward*," "which Mr. Warburton represents (says he) to be the state of the Jews under an equal Providence." [Exam. p. 187-8] Now what his drift was in this piece of management, is easily understood. It was to introduce a commodious Fallacy under an ambiguous expression;

be kept in good order, without the doctrine of a future State.

Yet

pression; which should be always at hand to answer his occasions. And indeed, the cautious reader, (and I would advise no other to have to do with him) will suspect no less, when he observes that the words, [*no Transgressor escaped Punishment, nor any Observer of the Law missed his Reward*] quoted from me, are not to be found in that place where I state the nature of the extraordinary Providence; but here, where I speak of the consequences of it, in the words above — *We have seen at large, &c.* What now has this ANSWERER done? He has taken the words [*no Transgressor escaping Punishment, nor any Observer of the Law missing his Reward*] from their natural place; misrepresented their purpose; and given them to the reader as my DEFINITION of an extraordinary Providence to Particulars. And not content with all this, he has put a false and sophistical sense upon them, *viz.* THAT NO ONE SINGLE PERSON, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, ever escaped Punishment, or missed his Reward. And in this sense, by the vilest prevarication, he repeats and applies them, on every following occasion, as the sole answer to all my reasonings on the subject of an extraordinary Providence. It will be proper then to shew, that the words could not mean, by any rules of just construction, that every single person, without exception, was thus punished and rewarded; but only that this extraordinary Providence over Particulars was so exactly administered, that no one could hope to escape it, or fear to be forgotten by it.

First then, let it be observed, that the words are no absolute assertion; but a consequence of something asserted. — AND THEN *no Transgressor escaping*, etc. which illative words the honest Examiner omitted. — What I had asserted was simply this, that the extraordinary Providence over the Jews was in Scripture represented as administered over Particulars; but that this very administration would of necessity be attended with some inequalities. Must not then the consequence I draw from these premises be as restrained as the premises themselves? Secondly, I said, that God had promised an equal Providence to Particulars, but that he had declared, at the same time, how it should be administered, *viz.* in such a manner as would occasion some few exceptions. If therefore Dr. Sykes would not allow me, he ought to have allowed God Almighty at least, to explain his own meaning. Thirdly, had the words been abso-

Yet still the violence of irregular passions would make some men of stronger complexions superior to all the fear of *personal temporal evil*. To lay hold therefore on These, and to gain a due ascendant over the most determined, the punishments, in this Institution, are extended to the POSTERITY

lute, as they then might have admitted of two senses, did not common ingenuity require, that I should be understood in that which was easiest to prove, when either was alike to my purpose? But there was still more than this to lead an ingenuous man into my meaning; which was, that he might observe, that I used, throughout my whole discourse of the Jewish Economy, the words *extraordinary Providence* and *equal Providence*, as equivalent terms. By which he might understand that I all along admitted of exceptions. Fourthly, If such rare cases of exception destroyed an equal Providence to *Particulars*, (which Providence I hold) it would destroy, with it, the equal Providence to the *State*, (which Dr. Sykes pretends to hold.) But if not for the sake of truth in opinion, yet for fair dealing in practice, Dr. Sykes should have interpreted my words not absolutely, but with exceptions. For thus stood the case. He quoted two positions from the *Divine Legation*. 1. That there was an extraordinary Providence over the State in general. 2. Over private men in particular. He grants the first; and denies the second. But is not the extent of that providence understood to be in both cases the same? Now in that over the *State*, he understands it to have been with exceptions, as appears from his own mention of the case of Achan, p. 190. and of David, p. 197. Ought he not then, by all the rules of honest reasoning, to have understood the proposition denied, in the same sense he understands the Proposition granted? If in the administration over the State in general, there were some few exceptions, why not in That over private men in particular?

But if now the candid reader shall ask me, Why I employed expressions, which, when divorced from the context, might be abused by a Caviller to a perverse meaning, I will tell him. I used them in imitation of the language of the Apostle, who says that, under the Jewish Economy, *EVERY transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward\**. And if He be to be understood with latitude, why may not I?

\* Heb. ii. 2.



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of wicked men ; which the instinctive fondness of Parents to their offspring would make terrible even to those who had hardened themselves into an insensibility of personal punishment : *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*<sup>d</sup>.

Now that this punishment was only to supply the want of a *Future state* is evident from hence<sup>e</sup> ; Towards the conclusion of this extraordinary OEconomy, when GOD, by the later Prophets, re-

<sup>d</sup> EXOD. xx. 5. Chap. xxxiv. 7. But as GOD acted with them in the capacity of the Creator and Father of all Men, as well as of tutelary God and King, he was pleased, at the same time, to provide that they should never lose the memory of the attributes of the Almighty : and therefore adds, — *And shewing mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.* NUMB. xiv. 18. DEUT. v. 9.

<sup>e</sup> “ The Author of the D. L. (says Dr. Sykes) goes on, and “ observes that this punishment [of visiting the iniquities of “ Fathers upon their Children] *was only to supply the want of a “ future state.* But how will this *extraordinary œconomy* SUPPLY this want ? The Children at present suffer for their “ Parents’ crimes ; and are supposed to be punished when they “ have no guilt. Is not this a plain act of *HARDSHIP* ? And “ if there be no future state or compensation made, the hardship done must continue for ever a hardship on the unhappy “ sufferer.” [Exam. of Mr. W’s. account, &c. p. 202—3.] For a Reasoner, it would be hard to find his fellow. 1. The question is, whether this Law of punishing, was a SUPPLY to the want of a future state ? If it laid hold of the passions, as he owns it did, it certainly was a SUPPLY. However, he will prove it was none. And how ? Because it was a *HARDSHIP*. 2. He supposes, I hold, that when Children were *punished*, in the proper sense of the word, they were innocent, whereas I hold, that then they were always guilty. When the innocent were affected by their Parents’ crimes, it was by the deprivation of benefits, in their nature forfeitable. 3. He supposes, that if Moses taught no future state, IT WOULD FOLLOW, that there was none.

veals his purpose of giving them a *new Dispensation*<sup>†</sup>, in which a Future state of reward and punishment was to be *brought to light*, it is then declared in the most express manner, that he will abrogate the Law of punishing Children for the crimes of their Parents. JEREMIAH, speaking of this *new Dispensation*, says: “ In *those days* they shall say  
 “ no more, The Fathers have eaten a sour grape,  
 “ and the Children’s teeth are set on edge: but  
 “ every one shall die for his own iniquity, every man  
 “ that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set  
 “ on edge. Behold the days come, saith the  
 “ Lord, that I will make a *new COVENANT* with  
 “ the House of Israel,——NOT according to the  
 “ Covenant that I made with their Fathers in the  
 “ day that I took them by the hand to bring them

<sup>†</sup> To this it hath been objected — “ As to the proof, that  
 “ visiting the iniquities of Parents on their Children was designed  
 “ to supply the want of a future state, because in a *new Dispensation*, it is foretold, that this mode of punishing will be  
 “ changed, this argument will not be admitted by the Deists,  
 “ who do not allow that a *new Dispensation* is revealed under  
 “ the phrase of a *new Covenant*.” Here the Objector should  
 have distinguished. — The Deists make two different attacks on  
 Revelation. In the one, They dispute that order, connexion,  
 and dependency between the two Dispensations, as they are delivered  
 in Scripture, and maintained by Believers: In the other, they admit (for arguments’ sake) this representation of revealed  
 Religion; and pretend to shew its falshood, even upon that footing.  
 Amongst their various arguments in this last method of attack,  
 one is, that the Jewish Religion had no sanction of a *future state*,  
 and so could not come from God. [See Lord Bolingbroke’s  
 Posthumous Writings.] The purpose of this work is to turn that  
 circumstance against them; and from the omission of the Doctrine,  
 demonstrate the Divine original of the Law. So that the Reader  
 sees, I am in order, when, to evince a *designed* omission, I explain  
 the Law of punishing the crimes of Fathers on the Children, from the  
 different natures of the two Dispensations; as going upon principles  
 acceded to, tho’ it be only *disputandi gratia*, by the Deists themselves.

“ out

“ out of the land of Egypt<sup>s</sup>, &c. And EZEKIEL speaking of the same times, says: “ I will give them one heart, and will put a NEW spirit within you, &c.—But as for them, whose heart walketh after the heart of their abominable things — *I will recompense their way UPON THEIR OWN HEADS*, saith the Lord God<sup>t</sup>.” And again: “ What mean ye, that you use this Proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the Childrens’ teeth are set on edge<sup>i</sup>? As I live, saith the Lord God, Ye shall *not have occasion any more to use this Proverb in Israel*. Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the Father, so also the soul of the Son is mine: *the soul that sinneth, it shall die<sup>k</sup>*.”

And yet (to shew more plainly that the *abrogation* of the Law was solely owing to this *new* Dispensation) the same Prophets, when their subject is the *present* Jewish Œconomy, speak of this very Law as still in force. Thus JEREMIAH: “ Thou shewest loving kindness unto thousands, and *recompensest the iniquity of the Fathers into the bosom of their Children* after them<sup>l</sup>.” And HOSEA: “ *Seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy Children<sup>m</sup>*.”

<sup>s</sup> Chap. xxxi. 20—33.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. xi. ver. 19—21.

<sup>i</sup> It hath been objected, “ That the Prophet here upbraids the Jews as blameable in the use of this proverb.” Without doubt. And their fault evidently consisted in this, That they would insinuate that an *innocent* posterity were punished for the crimes of their forefathers; whereas we have shewn, that when the *childrens’ teeth were set on edge*, they likewise had been tasting.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xviii. ver. 2—4.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. xxxii. ver. 18.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. iv. ver. 6.

From



From all this I conclude, That, whoever was the real Author of what goes under the name of the *Law of Moses*, was at least well acquainted with the *importance* of the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment; and provided well for the *want* of it.

But the blindness of Infidelity is here most deplorable. The Deists are not content with condemning this Law of injustice, but will accuse the Dispensation itself of inconsistency; pretending that the Prophets have directly contradicted Moses in their manner of denouncing punishment.

It is indeed the standing triumph of infidelity. *But let us return* (says SPINOZA) *to the Prophets, whose discordant opinions we have undertaken to lay open.* — *The xviiiith chap. of EZEKIEL does not seem to agree with the 7th ver. of the xxxivth chap. of EXODUS, nor with the 18th ver. of the xxxiud chap. of JEREMIAH, &c.* — “There are several mistakes (says TYNDAL) crept into the Old Testament, where there’s scarce a chapter which gives any historical account of matters, but there are some things in it which could not be there originally. — It must be owned, that the same spirit (I dare not call it a spirit of cruelty) does not alike prevail throughout the Old Testament; the nearer we come to the times of the Gospel, the milder it appears: for though God declares in the Decalogue, that he is *a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children to the third and fourth Generation*, and

” — Sed ad Prophetas revertamur, quorum discrepantes opiniones etiam notare suscepimus — Cap. saltem xviii. Ezech. non videtur convenire cum versu 7. cap. xxxiv. Exod. nec cum ver. 18. Cap. xxxii. Jer. &c. *Tract. Theologica-Pol.* p. 27, 28.

“ accordingly

“ accordingly Achan, with all his family, was  
 “ destroyed for his single crime; yet the Lord af-  
 “ terwards says, *The soul that sinneth it shall die;*  
 “ *the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*°,  
 “ &c.<sup>p</sup>”

I. Let us see then what these men have to say on the first point, the *injustice of the Law*. They set out on a false supposition, that this method of punishment was part of an universal Religion given by God as the Creator and Governor of mankind: whereas it is only part of a civil Institute, given by him to *one People*, as their *tutelary God* and *civil Governor*. Now we know it to be the practice of all States to punish the crime of lese Majesty in this manner. And to render it just, no more

° *Christ. as old as the Creation*, p. 240, 241.

<sup>p</sup> Dr. Stebbing has thought fit to support this charge of contradiction urged by Spinoza and Tyndal, very effectually. He insults the author of the D. L. for pretending to clear up a difficulty, where there was none. “ He [the author of the “ D. L.] has also justified the equity of *another Law*, that of “ *punishing posterity for the crimes of their forefathers*. — Tho’ “ it is one of the plainest cases in the world, that God doth “ this EVERY DAY in the ordinary exercise of his Providence.” *Hist. of Abr.* p. 89. — MOSES says, *God will visit the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children*. JEREMIAH and EZEKIEL say as expressly, that *God will not do so*. See, exclaim Spinoza and Tyndal, the discordancies and contradictions amongst these Prophets. Softly, replies the Author of the *Divine Legation*, You mistake the matter; the contradiction is all a fiction of your own brains: Moses speaks of the *Jewish Dispensation*; and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, of the *Christian*. I deny that, cries Dr. Stebbing, *punishing posterity for the crimes of their Fathers is done every day under the Christian Dispensation*. And thus the objection of Spinoza and Tyndal, by the kind pains of Dr. Stebbing, remains not only unanswered, but unanswerable. And yet this is the man, whose zeal would not let him rest till he had rescued Revelation from the dishonours brought upon it by the Author of the *Divine Legation*.

is required than that it was in the Compact (as it certainly was here) on men's free entrance into Society.

When a *guilty* Posterity suffered for the crimes of their Parents, they were deprived of their natural unconditional rights; when an *innocent*, they only forfeited their conditional and civil: But as this method of punishment was administered with more lenity in the Jewish Republic, so it was with infinite more rectitude, than in any other. For although God allowed capital punishment to be inflicted for the crime of *lese majesty*, on the *Person of the offender*, by the delegated administration of the Law; yet concerning his *Family* or *Posterity* he reserved the inquisition of the crime to himself, and expressly forbid the Magistrate to meddle with it, in the common course of justice. *The Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, neither shall the Children be put to death for the Fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin*<sup>a</sup>. And we find the Magistrate careful not to intrench on this part of God's jurisdiction. We are told, that as soon as Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah became firmly established in the throne, *He slew his servants which had slain the King his Father. But the CHILDREN of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses*, [Deut xxiv. 16.] *wherein the Lord commanded saying, The Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, &c*<sup>r</sup>. Yet such hath been the perversity or stupidity of Freethinking, that this very text itself hath been charged with contradicting the xxth chapter of EXODUS. Now God's appropriating to himself the

<sup>a</sup> DEUT. xxiv. 16.

<sup>r</sup> 2 KINGS xiv. 5, 6.



execution of the Law in question would abundantly justify the equity of it, even supposing it had been given by him as part of an *universal religion*. For why was the Magistrate forbidden to imitate God's method of punishing, but because no power less than omniscient could, in all cases, keep clear of injustice in such an inquisition?

But God not only reserved this method of punishment to himself, but has graciously condescended to inform us, by his Prophets, *after what manner* he was pleased to administer it. YOUR INIQUITIES (says he) AND THE INIQUITIES OF YOUR FATHERS TOGETHER, *which have burnt incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom*. And again: "But ye say, Why? doth not the Son  
" bear the iniquity of the Father? When the Son  
" hath done that which is lawful and right, and  
" hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them,  
" he shall surely live — But when the Righteous  
" turneth away from his righteousness and com-  
" mitteth iniquity—shall he live?"

\* Is. lxxv. 7.

† EZEK. xviii. 19 and 24.

" Yet Doctor Sykes modestly tells his reader, that "there is not  
" any ground or foundation for this distinction; for that the in-  
" nocent posterity were sometimes deprived of life for the crimes  
" of their Parents in virtue of this Law."—But here, as the Doc-  
tor has not to do with me, but with the Prophet, I leave it to be  
adjusted between them, as the Public shall think fit to arbitrate.  
— Another has even ventured to ask, "How the Posterity, if  
" it suffer for its own guilt, can be said to suffer for the trans-  
" gressions of its Parents?" As this doubt arises from the  
Prophets words, *Your iniquity and the iniquities of your fathers  
together*, &c. I think myself not concerned to satisfy it, till  
these Writers have more openly rejected the authority of the  
Prophets.

So much for that case in which the Posterity were *iniquitous*, and suffered punishment, in the strict and proper sense of the word. But doubtless, an innocent Posterity were sometimes punished, according to the denunciation of this Law, for the crimes of their wicked Fathers<sup>x</sup>; as is done by modern States, in attain of blood and confiscation: and this, with the highest equity in both cases.

In our Gothic Constitutions, the throne being the fountain of honour and source of property, *Lands and Titles descend from it*, and were held as *FIEFS of it*, under perpetual obligation of military and civil services. Hence the LAWS OF FORFEITURE for high treason<sup>y</sup>, the most violent breach of  
of

<sup>x</sup> This appears from the rise of that proverb in Israel, *The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the Childrens teeth are set on edge.*

<sup>y</sup> It is observable that by our own Constitution, no forfeitures attend capital condemnations in the Lord High Admiral's and Constable's Courts. And why? the reason is plain; those Judicatures proceed on the Roman, and not on the municipal laws of a feudal Government. Not but that the necessities of state frequently obliged other Governments which never had been feudal, to have recourse to an extemporaneous confiscation. Even Rome itself sometimes exercised the severity of this punishment, even before it fell under the feet of its Tyrants. Cicero, to excuse the confiscations decreed against Lepidus, which affected his children, the nephews of Brutus, says to this latter: *Nec vero me fugit quàm sit acerbum, parentium scelera filiorum poenis lui. Sed hoc PRÆCLARE LEGIBUS COMPARATUM est, ut caritas liberorum amiciores parentes reipublicæ redderet. Ep. ad Brutum liber, Ep. 12.* And again: *In qua videtur illud esse crudele, quod ad liberos, qui nihil meruerunt, poena pervenit. SED ID ET ANTIQVUM EST, ET OMNIUM CIVITATVM. Ep. 15.* Again, the same necessities of State have obliged Governments which had been originally



of the condition on which those *fiefs* were granted. Nor was there any injustice in the forfeiture of what was acquired by no natural right, but by civil compact, how much soever the confiscation might affect an innocent posterity.

The same principles operated under a Theocracy. God supported the Israelites in Judea, by an extraordinary administration of his providence. The consequence of which were great temporal blessings to which they had no natural claim; given them on condition of obedience. Nothing therefore could be more equitable than, on the violation of that condition, to withdraw those extraordinary blessings from the Children of a Father thus offending. How then can the Deist charge this Law with injustice? since a Posterity when *innocent* was affected only in their civil conditional rights; and, when deprived of those which were natural and unconditional, were always guilty.

From all this it appears, that the excellent GROTIUS himself had a very crude and imperfect notion of the whole matter, when he resolved the justice of it intirely into God's sovereign right over his creatures. "Deus quidem in lege Hebræis  
" data-paternam impietatem in posteros se vindicaturum minatur: sed ipse Jus Domini plenissimum habet, ut in res nostras, ita in vitam nostram, ut munus suum, quod sine ulla causa

originally feudal, but were so no longer to retain this *Law of forfeiture*, essential to feudal Government even after all the feudal tenures had been abolished. But he, who would see the *LAW OF FORFEITURES* defended on the more general principles of natural justice and civil policy, may have full satisfaction, in the very elegant and masterly Discourse so intitled.

" & quovis



" & quovis tempore auferre cuivis, quando vult, potest <sup>z</sup>."

II. As to the second point, the charge of *Contradiction in the Dispensation*, we now see, that, on the contrary, these different declarations of God's manner of punishing in two so distant Periods, are the MOST DIVINE INSTANCE of constancy and uniformity in the manifestations of eternal Justice: So far are they from any indication of a *milder or severer Spirit*, as Tyndal with equal insolence and folly hath objected to Revelation. For while a *future state* was kept hid from the Jews, there was absolute need of such a Law to restrain the more daring Spirits, by working on their instincts; or, as Cicero expresses it — *ut caritas liberorum amiciores Parentes Reipublicæ redderet*. But when a doctrine was *brought to light* which held them up, and continued them after death, the objects of divine justice<sup>a</sup>, it had then no farther use;

<sup>z</sup> *De Jure Bel. & Pac.* vol. ii. p. 393. Ed. Barbeyrac, Amst. 1720.

<sup>a</sup> Here Dr. Sykes, who so charitably takes the *Deist's* part, all the way, against the Author of the D. L. says, "It would have been well to HAVE TOLD us what this doctrine was which was *brought to light*, and which *held up* these daring transgressors, and which *continued* them after death the objects of divine justice." *Defence*, p. 83. Can the Reader, when he casts his eye upon the text, and sees that *I had told him*, in so many words and letters, that it was a FUTURE STATE, think the grave Doctor in his senses? But this quotation from him will have its use. It will serve for a specimen and example of the miserable dispositions with which an *Answerer by profession* addresses himself to confute Writers who have taken some pains to consider their subject, and to express their meaning.

He goes on objecting to this *unknown* doctrine. He asks "*how this doctrine did these things?*" That is, how the doctrine  
of

use; and was therefore reasonably to be abolished with the rest of the judicial Laws, peculiar to the Mosaic Dispensation. But these men have taken it into their heads (and what comes slowly in, will go slowly out) that it was repealed for its *injustice*; tho' another reason be as plainly intimated by the Prophets, as the circumstances of those times would permit; and so plainly by JEREMIAH, that none but such heads could either not see or not acknowledge it. In his thirty first chapter, foretelling the advent of the new Dispensation, he expressly says, this Law shall be revoked: *IN THOSE DAYS they shall say no more, The Fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the Childrens' teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity*<sup>b</sup>. Yet, in the very next chapter, speaking of the old Dispensation, under which they then lived, he as expressly declares the Law to be still in force. *When*

of a future state could extend beyond the present life? This shews at least, he was in earnest in his ignorance, and perfectly well assured that *I had not told him what the doctrine was*.

He proceeds with his interrogations, and asks, *Why the punishing Children for their Fathers' faults had no further use after the bringing in a future state?* I had told him long ago, it was because the punishment was employed only to supply the want of a future state. But to this, he replies, — *nothing hindered its being added to the doctrine of a future state*. It is very true: nor did any thing hinder temporal rewards from being added to the doctrine of a future state under the Gospel, yet when a future state was brought to light, by that Dispensation, both one and the other were abolished. But is it not a little strange that the Doctor, in thus insisting on its further use, on account of its being able to restrain more daring Spirits, by laying hold of their instincts, at all times, as well under an *unequal* as under an *equal* providence, should not see he was arguing against the DIVINE WISDOM, who by the mouth of the Prophet declared it of no further use under the Gospel-dispensation?

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 29, 30.



*I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch, I prayed unto the Lord, saying,—Thou shewest loving kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their Children after them<sup>c</sup>. Is this like a man who had forgot himself? or who suspected the Law of cruelty or injustice?*

But the ignorance of Free-thinking was here unaffected; and indeed the more excusable, as the matter had of old perplexed both Jews and Christians. The Synagogue was so scandalized at EZEKIEL'S Declarations against this mode of punishment, that they deliberated a long time whether he should not be thrown out of the Canon, for contradicting MOSES in so open a manner<sup>d</sup>. And Sentence had at last past upon him, but that one *Chanani*as promised to reconcile the two Prophets. How he kept his word, is not known, for there is nothing of his extant upon the subject; only we are told that he approved himself a man of honour, and, with great labour and study, at length did the business<sup>e</sup>.

ORIGEN

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 16 and 18.

<sup>d</sup> Les Juifs disent qu'Ezechiel étoit serviteur de Jérémie, & que le Sanhedrin delibera long-tems, si l'on rejetteroit son Livre du Canon des Ecritures. Le sujet de leur chagrin contre ce Prophete vient de son extreme obscurité, & de ce qu'il enseigne diverses choses contraires à Moïse—Ezechiel, disent ils, a déclaré, *Que le fils ne porteroit plus l'iniquité de son pere*, contre ce que Moïse did expressement, *Que le Seigneur venge l'iniquité des Peres sur les Enfans, jusqu'à la troisieme & quatrieme generation*. Calmet, Dissert. vol. ii. p. 361.

<sup>e</sup> Ezechielis sententias adeo sententiis Moſis repugnantes invenierunt Rabbini, qui nobis illos (qui jam tantum extant) libros Prophetarum reliquerunt, ut fere deliberaverint, ejus librum  
inter



ORIGEN was so perplexed with the different assertions of these two Prophets, that he could find no better way of reconciling them than by having recourse to his *allegorical* fanaticism, and supposing the words of the first to be a Parable or Mystic speech; which, however, he would not pretend to decipher. This learned Father, having quoted some pagan Oracles intimating that Children were punished for the crimes of their Forefathers, goes on in this manner: "How much more equitable is what our Scriptures say on this point? *The Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, neither shall the Children be put to death for the Fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.* DEUT. xxiv. 16, &c.— But if any one should object that this verse of the oracle,

"*On the Childrens Children and their Posterity;*

"is very like what Scripture says, that God *visits the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto*

inter canonicos non admittere, atque eundem plane abscondissent, nisi quidam Chananias in se suscepisset ipsunt explicare, quod tandem magno cum labore & studio (ut ibi narratur) aiant ipsum fecisse, qua ratione autem non satis constat. — *Spinoza Tract. Theologico-Pol.* p. 27, 28. In the mean time it may be worth observing, that the explanation which I have here offered, cuts off the only means the modern Jews have of accounting for their long Captivity upon the Principle of the Law's being still in force. Limborch urges Orobio with the difficulty of accounting for their present dispersion any other way than for the national crime of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah; seeing they are so far from falling into Pagan idolatries, the crime which brought on their other Captivities, that they are remarkably tenacious of the Mosaic Rites. To which Orobio replies, "that they are not their own sins for which they now suffer, but the sins of their forefathers." Now Ezekiel has declared (and I have reconciled that declaration to the *Law and the Prophets*) that this mode of punishment hath been long abolished.

EXOD. xx. EZEK. xviii.

"the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him, Exod. xx. 5. he may learn from Ezekiel that those words are a PARABLE; for the Prophet reproves such as say, *The Fathers have eaten sour Grapes, and the Childrens teeth are set on edge*; and then it follows: *As I live, saith the Lord, every one shall die for his own sins only.* But this is not the place to explain what is meant by the PARABLE of *visiting iniquity unto the third and fourth generation*<sup>b</sup>." There could hardly be more mistakes in so few words. The two texts in Deuteronomy and Exodus, which Origen represents as treating of the same subject, treat of subjects very different: the first, as we have shewn above, concerns the Magistrate's execution of the Law; the other, that which God reserves to himself. Again, because the text of Exodus apparently occasioned the Proverb mentioned by Ezekiel and Jeremiah, therefore by a strange blunder or prevarication, the Father brings the Proverb in proof that the Law which gave birth to it, was but a Proverb or *parable* itself<sup>b</sup>.

## II.

<sup>b</sup> Ὅσα δὲ ὅσα τένα βέβηται τὸ, οὐκ ἀποθανῆναι, ἔσθ. ἐὰν δὲ τις ἄριστος εἴηαι λόγῳ τῷ

Ἐς παίδων παίδας οἱ καὶ ὁπίσθιν γίνωσκαι,

τὸ, Ἀποδοῦναι ἀμαρτίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα, ἐπὶ τρίτην καὶ τετάρτην γενεάν τοῖς μισοῦσι [με] μαθεῖται, ὅτι ἐν τῷ Ἰεζεκιήλ παραβολὴ τὸ τοιούτων εἶναι λέγεσθαι, αἰτιωμένης τῆς λέγουσας, Οἱ πατέρες ἔφαγον ὄψακα, καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν τέκνων ἠρωδίασαν· ὃ ἐπιφέρειται, Ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει Κύριος, ἀλλ' ἢ ἕκαστος τῇ ἐαυτοῦ ἀμαρτίᾳ ἀποθάνειται. Οὐ κατὰ τὸν παρόντα δὲ καιρὸν εἶναι, διηγῆσασθαι τί σημαίνει ἡ αἰτιολογία τῆς τρίτης καὶ τετάρτης γενεᾶν ἀποδοῦναι τὰς ἀμαρτίας παραβολῇ. *Conf. Cels. p. 403.*

<sup>b</sup> Having thus reconciled the two Prophets, Moses and Ezekiel, on this point, one may be allowed to wonder a little at the want of good faith even in M. Voltaire, when it comes to a certain extreme.

This



## II.

We have now shewn that MOSES did not teach a future state of reward and punishment; and that he

This celebrated Poet has, like an honest man, written in defence of RELIGIOUS TOLERATION: and to inforce his argument has endeavoured, (not indeed like a wise one, who should weigh his subject before he undertakes it) to prove, that all Religions in the world, but the Christian, have tolerated diversities of opinion. This common weakness of rounding one's System, for the support of a plain Right which requires no such finishing, hath led him into two of the strangest paradoxes that ever disgraced common sense.

The one, that the *Pagan Emperors* did not persecute the Christian Faith: The other, that the *Jewish Magistrate* did not punish for Idolatry.

In support of the first, his *bad faith* is most conspicuous; in support of the latter, his *bad logic*.

If there be one truth in Antiquity better established than another, it is this, That the Pagan Emperors did persecute the Christians *for their faith only*; established, I say, both by the complaints of the Persecuted, and the acknowledgment of their Persecutors. But this being proved at large in the preface to this very Volume, it is enough to refer the Reader thither.

The other Paradox is much more pleasantly supported. He proves that the Mosaic Law did not denounce punishment on religious errors, (tho' in direct words, it does so) nor did the Jewish Magistrate execute it, (tho' we have several instances of the infiction recorded in their history.) — And what is the convincing argument he employs? It is this, *The frequent defections of the Jewish People into Idolatry, in the early times of their apostacies?* An argument hardly so good as this, — *The Church of Rome did not persecute, as appears from that general defection from it, in the sixteenth Century.* I say, Mr. Voltaire's argument is hardly so good as my illustration of it, since the defection from the Church of Rome still continues, and the Jewish defections into Idolatries were soon at an end.

But we are not to think, this Paradox was advanced for nothing, that is, for the sake of its own singular boldness, (a



he omitted it with design; that he understood its great importance to society; and that he provided for

motive generally sufficient to set reason at defiance) nor even for the support of his general question. It was apparently advanced to get the easier at his darling subject, THE ABUSE OF THE MOSAIC RELIGION, that *Marotte* of our party-coloured Philosopher.

Take this instance, which is all that a cursory note will be able to afford.

Mr. Voltaire, speaking of the *rewards and punishments* of the Jewish Dispensation, expresses himself in this manner, "Tout était temporel; et c'est la preuve que le savant Evêque Warburton apporte pour démontrer que la Loi des Juifs, était divine; parce que Dieu même étant leur Roi, rendant justice immédiatement après la transgression ou l'obéissance, n'avait pas besoin de leur révéler une Doctrine qu'il réservait au tems où il ne gouvernerait plus son peuple. Ceux qui par ignorance prétendent que Moïse enseignait l'immortalité de l'ame, ôtent au nouveau Testament un de ses plus grands avantages sur l'ancien \*." Would not any one now believe (who did not know Mr. Voltaire) that he quoted this argument, as what he thought a good one, for the divinity of the Mosaic Religion? Nothing like it. It was only to find occasion to accuse the Old Testament of contradiction. For thus he goes on, — "Cependant malgré l'énoncé précis de cette Loi, malgré cette déclaration expresse de Dieu, qu'il punirait jusqu'à la quatrième génération; *Ezechiel* annonce TOUT LE CONTRAIRE aux Juifs, et leur dit, que le Fils ne portera point l'iniquité de son père: il va même jusqu'à faire dire à Dieu, qu'il leur avait donné des préceptes qui n'étaient pas bons †."

As for the *precepts which were not good*, the Reader will see that matter explained at large, as we go along. What I have to do with Mr. Voltaire at present, is to expostulate with him for his ill faith; that when he had borrowed my argument for the divinity of the Mosaic Mission from that mode of punishment, he would venture to invalidate it from an apparent contradiction between MOSES and EZEKIEL; when, in that very place of the *Divine Legation* which he refers to, he saw the two Prophets reconciled by an argument drawn from the true

for the want of it. And if we may believe a great Statesman and Philosopher, "Moses had need of every SANCTION that his knowledge or his imagination could suggest to govern the unruly people, to whom he gave a Law, in the name of God."

But as the proof of this point is only for the sake of its Consequence, that *therefore the people had not the knowledge of that doctrine*, our next step will be to establish this Consequence: Which (if we take in those circumstances attending the *Omission*, just explained above) will, at the same time, shew my argument in support of this *Omission* to be more than *negative*.

Now though one might fairly conclude, that the Peoples' not having this Doctrine, was a necessary consequence of Moses's not teaching it, in a Law

natures of two approximating Dispensations; an argument which not only removes the pretended contradiction, (first insisted on by *Spinoza*, and, through many a dirty channel, derived, at length, to Mr. Voltaire) but likewise supports that very mark of divinity which I contend for.

But it is too late in the day to call in question the Religion or the good faith of this truly ingenious man. What I want, in this Discourse *sur la Tolérance*, is his CIVIL PRUDENCE. As an ANNALIST, he might, in his *General History*, calumniate the Jewish People just as his passions or his caprice inclined him: But when he had assumed the character of a DIVINE, to recommend *Toleration* to a Christian State, could he think to succeed by abusing *Revelation*? He seems indeed, to have set out under a sense of the necessity of a different conduct: But coming to his darling subject an abuse of the Jews, he could not, for his life, sustain the personage he had assumed, but breaks out again into all the virulence and injustice with which he persecuted this unhappy People in his *General History*; and of which the Reader will see a fair account, in this volume, b. v. sect. 1.

<sup>1</sup> *Bolingbroke's Works*, vol. v. p. 513.



which forbids the least addition <sup>k</sup> to the written Institute; yet I shall shew, from a circumstance, the clearest and most incontestable, that the Israelites, from the time of Moses to the time of their Captivity, had not the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment.

THE BIBLE contains a very circumstantial History of this People throughout the aforesaid period. It contains not only the history of public occurrences, but the lives of private persons of both sexes, and of all ages, conditions, characters and complexions; in the adventures of Virgins, Matrons, Kings, Soldiers, Scholars, Merchants and Husbandmen. All these, in their turns, make their appearance before us. They are given too in every circumstance of life; captive, victorious; in sickness, and in health; in full security, and amidst impending dangers; plunged in Civil business, or retired and sequestered in the service of Religion. Together with their Story, we have their Compositions likewise. Here they sing their triumphs; there, their palinodia. Here, they offer up to the Deity their hymns of praise; and there, petitions for their wants: here, they urge their moral precepts to their Contemporaries; and there, they treasure up their Prophecies and Predictions for posterity; and to both, denounce the promises and threatenings of Heaven. Yet in none of these different circumstances of life, in none of these various casts of composition, do we ever find them acting on the motives, or influenced by the prospect of future rewards and punishments; or indeed expressing the least hope or fear, or even common curiosity concerning them. But every thing they do or say

<sup>k</sup> DEUT. iv. 2. Chap. xii. ver. 32.



respects the present life only ; the good and ill of which are the sole objects of all their pursuits and aversions <sup>1</sup>.

Hear then the sum of all. The sacred Writings are extremely various both in their subject, style, and composition. They contain an account of the Creation, and Origine of the human race ; the history of a private Family, of a chosen People, and of exemplary men and women. They consist of hymns and petitions to the Deity, precepts of civil life, and religious Prophecies and Predictions. Hence I infer that as, amidst all this variety of writing, the Doctrine of a future state never once appears to have had any share in this People's thoughts ; it never did indeed make part of their

<sup>1</sup> This is the precise character of the writings of the Old Testament. And this state of them (to observe it only by the way) is more than a thousand answers to the wild suspicions of those writers, who fancy that the Jews, since Christ, have corrupted their sacred Scriptures, to support their superstitions against the Gospel ; and amongst other erasements have struck out the Doctrine of life and immortality ; which, say these Visionaries, was, till then, as plainly taught in the Old as in the New Testament : For had these supposed Imposters ever ventured on so bold a fraud as the adulterating their sacred Writings, we may be well assured their first attempt would have been to add the doctrine of a future state, had they not found it there, rather than to take it away if they had : since the omission of the doctrine is the strongest and most glaring evidence of the *imperfection of the Law* ; and the insertion of it would have best supported what they now hold to be one of the most *fundamental* points of their Religion. — But this is not a folly of yesterday. Irenæus tells us that certain ancient Heretics supported their wild fancies against Scripture, which was against them, by the same extravagant suspicion, that it had been interpolated and corrupted. Notwithstanding, I am far from thinking these Moderns borrowed it from them. They found it in our common Nature, which always goes the nearest way to work, to relieve itself.

Religious opinions<sup>m</sup>. And when, to all this, we find, their *occasional* reasoning only conclusive on the

<sup>m</sup> We shall now understand the importance of a remark, which the late Translator of Josephus employs to prove the genuineness of a fragment or homily, given by him to that Historian: "There is one particular observation (says he) belonging to the contents of this fragment or homily, that seems to me to be DECRETORY, and to determine the question that some of this Jewish church, that used the Hebrew copy of the Old Testament, nay rather, that Josephus himself in particular was the author of it. The observation is this, that in the present address to the Greeks or Gentiles there are near forty references or allusions to texts of the New Testament; AND NOT ONE, TO ANY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT either in Hebrew or Greek; and this in a discourse concerning HADES; which yet is almost five times as often mentioned in the Old Testament as in the New. What can be the reason of this? But that the Jewish Church at Jerusalem used the Hebrew Bible alone, which those Greeks or Gentiles, to whom the address is here made, could not understand; and that our Josephus always and only used the same Hebrew Bible?" *Mr. Whiston's Dissert.* prefixed to his *Transl. of Josephus*, p. 105. — *What can be the reason* (says he) *of this mystery?* He unfolds it thus: *The Jewish Church of Jerusalem used the Hebrew Bible alone, which those Greeks or Gentiles, to whom the address is here made, could not understand.* So that because the Audience did not understand Hebrew, the Preacher could not quote the texts, he had occasion for, in Greek. But he supposes the Author could not quote the Greek, because it must needs have been that of the *Septuagint*; which the Jewish Church at Jerusalem would not use. Now admit there were no other Greek to be had, or allowed of, Can any man believe that if this Jewish Preacher would turn himself to the Gentiles, he could be such a bigot as to be afraid of quoting the Old Testament in a language they understood, because his Church used only the Original which they understood not? Or if he had been such a bigot, Would he have dared to preach to the Gentiles at all? What then but the fondness for an hypothesis could make men ramble after such reasons, when so obvious an one lies just before them? Why did he this, do you ask? For this plain reason: His subject was a *future state of reward and punishment*, and he had more sense than to seek for it where it was not to be found. *Oh but HADES is almost five times as often mentioned in the Old Testament as in the New.* Indeed! But the fragment is not about the word, but the thing.

In

the supposition that a future state was not amongst the Religious doctrines of the People, the above considerations, if they needed any, would receive the strongest support and confirmation. To give one example out of many. The Psalmist says, *For the rod of the Wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the Righteous: lest the Righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity*". That is, "God will vigorously administer that extraordinary Providence which the nature of the Dispensation required to be administered, lest the Righteous, not seeing themselves exempt from the evils due to wickedness, should conclude that there was no moral Governor of the world; and so, by making their own private interest the rule of their actions, fall into the practice of all kind of iniquity." But this could never be the consequence where an unequal dispensation of Providence was attended with the knowledge and belief of a future state. And here I will appeal to those who are most prejudiced against this reasoning. Let them speak, and tell me, if they were now first shewn some history of an old Greek Republic, delivered in the form and manner of the Jewish, and no more notice in it of a future state, Whether they could possibly believe that that Doctrine was National, or generally known in it. If they have the least ingenuity, they will answer, They could

In the Old Testament it signified the receptacle of *dead bodies*; in the New, the receptacle of *living souls*. But though this learned writer can, without doubt, laugh at those who seek the *Trinity* in the Old Testament, yet he can in good earnest go thither in search of a *Future state*. Yet this latter is not in any comparison so clearly hinted at as the other: and no wonder; a Future state is circumscribed to the New Testament, as *brought to light* by the Gospel; but the doctrine of the *Trinity* is so where said to be so circumscribed.



not. On what then do they support their opinion here, but on religious Prejudices? Prejudices of no higher an original than some Dutch or German System: for, as to the BIBLE, one half of it is silent concerning *life and immortality*; and the other half declares that the doctrine was *brought to light through the Gospel*.

But to set this argument in its fullest light. Let us consider the History of the rest of mankind, whether recorded by Bards, or Statesmen; by Philosophers, or Priests: in which we shall find the *doctrine of a future state* still bearing, throughout all the various circumstances of human life, a constant and principal share in the determinations of the Will. And no wonder. We see how strong the Grecian world thought the sanction of it to be, by a passage in Pindar, quoted by Plutarch in his tract of *Superstition*, where he makes it one circumstance of the superior happiness of the Gods, over men, that they stood not in fear of Acheron.

But not to be distracted by too large a view, let us select from the rest of the Nations, one or two most resembling the Jewish. Those which came nearest to them, (and, if the Jews were only under human guidance, indeed extremely near) were the SUEVI of the north, and the ARABS of the south. Both these People were led out in search of new Possessions, which they were to win by the sword. And both, it is confessed, had the doctrine of a *Future state* inculcated unto them by their leaders, ODIN and MAHOMET. Of the Arabs we have a large and circumstantial history: Of the Suevi we have only some few fragments of the songs and ballads of their Bards; yet they  
equally

equally serve to support our Conclusion. In the large history of the Saracen Empire we can scarce find a page, and in the Runic rhymes of the Suevi scarce a line, where the doctrine of a future state was not pushing on its influence. It was their constant Viaticum through life; it stimulated them to war and slaughter, and spirited their songs of triumph; it made them insensible of pain, immoveable in danger, and superior to the approach of death°.

For,

• To all this, Dr. Stebbing has an *Answer* ready, “The History of the persecution under Antiochus (says he) is written by two Historians, namely, the Author of the first book of Maccabees, and the Author of the second. This last writer has recorded the profession of the Martyrs concerning their belief of the doctrine of the Resurrection; but the first has entirely omitted it: nor is there one word about a resurrection or future state to be found throughout his whole History, though it is certain it was now the national belief. So UNSAFE a thing is it to rely upon the MERE silence of historians, when they undertake to write a history not of doctrines but of the transactions of men.” *Exam.* p. 116.

I will tell him of an un safer thing: which is, venturing to draw *parallel cases*; as he has done here; for they may happen, (as hath happened here) to be *cases most unlike*.

In a large and miscellaneous Volume, composed by various Writers of different times and states, and containing the Law, the Religion, and the History of the Jews, from Moses to the Captivity, neither the Doctrines of the resurrection nor a future state are ever once mentioned.

This is the Fact. And to obviate my inference from it, — “That the Jews, during that period, were unacquainted with the Doctrines,” this able Divine opposes the two books of *Maccabees*, containing the story of one short period, when, it is confessed, these Doctrines were of national belief; in the first of which Books, there is no mention of the Doctrine, and in the second, a great deal: the reason both of the mention and of the silence being self evident. It is recorded in the *second* book, where there is a detailed account of the Martyrs for the Jewish



For, what Cicero says of Poetry in Rome, may be more truly applied to the Doctrine of a Future state

Jewish Faith: it is omitted in the *first*, where there is no account of any such thing.

Yet these are brought as *parallel cases*: Let us therefore do them all honour.

1. Several Volumes of the sacred Canon contain a *history of doctrines*.

The two books of Maccabees contain only a *history of civil transactions*.

2. None of the inspired Writers of the Canon before the Captivity ever once mention the Doctrines of a resurrection or a future state.

Of the two books of Maccabees, one of them mentions the Doctrines fully and at large.

3. The sacred Canon comprises a vast period of time, and treats of an infinite variety of matters.

The two books of Maccabees are small tracts of an uniform subject, and contain only the story of one revolution in the Jewish State.

Unconscious, as should seem, of all this difference, the learned Doctor concludes — *So unsafe a thing it is to rely on the MERE SILENCE of Historians, when they undertake to write a history NOT OF DOCTRINES, but of the transactions of Men.* In which, these THREE FALSEHOODS are very gravely and magisterially insinuated: That the Writers of the two books of Maccabees are equally *silent* with the Writers of the Canon: 2. That all the Writers of the Canon are writers of a History, *not of the Doctrines*, but merely of the civil transactions of men, equally with the writers of the two Books of Maccabees: And 3. That the thing relied on by me, is the MERE SILENCE of Historians: Which falsehood if the Reader does not see from what has been said above, he may be pleased to consider, that *mere silence* is when a Writer omits to say a thing which it was indifferent to his purpose whether he said or not. But when he omits to say



state amongst these Barbarians: "Ceteræ neque  
 "temporum sunt, neque ætatum omnium, neque  
 "locorum.

say a thing, which it was much to his purpose to say, this is not a mere silence. It is a silence attended with a circumstance, which makes the evidence drawn from that silence something more than negative, and, consequently, something more than mere silence. So much for Dr. Stebbing.

A Cornish Writer \* pursues the same argument against the Divine Legation; but takes his parallel much higher. "There is no one (says he) who reads HOMER that can doubt whether a Future state were the popular belief amongst the Greeks in the times he writes of. And yet, by what I remember of him, I believe it would be difficult to produce SIX instances in all his poems of any actions either entered upon or avoided from the EXPRESS motive of the rewards or punishments to be expected in the other world."

I inferred from a Future state's NEVER being mentioned in the Jewish History, amongst the motives of men's actions, (after it had been omitted in the Jewish Law and Religion) that it was not of popular belief amongst that people. Now here comes an Answerer, and says, that it is not mentioned above SIX TIMES EXPRESSLY in Homer, and yet that no body can doubt whether it were not the popular belief amongst the Greeks. The good cautious man! Had it been but ONCE EXPRESSLY mentioned in the Old Testament, I should no more have doubted of its being of popular belief amongst the Jews, than he does. Why then do we doubt so little, in the case of the Greeks, but for the same reason why we ought to doubt so much in the case of the Jews! HOMER, (who gives a detailed account of a future state) this writer allows, has mentioned it about six times as a motive. The SCRIPTURES (which, together with the history, deliver the Law and Religion of the Jews, in which a future state is omitted) mention it not once, as a motive. But this Answerer would make the reader believe, I made my inference from the paucity, and not from the want, of the mention. The same may be observed of another expression of this candid Gentleman's — *express motive*. Now much less would have satisfied me; and I should readily have allowed that the Jews had the popular belief amongst them had the motive been but once fairly implied.

• Mr. Peters.

But

"locorum. Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, se-  
 "nectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, AD-  
 "VERSIS PERFUGIUM AC SOLATIUM PRÆBENT P."

But

But let us take him at the best, and suppose Homer did not afford one single instance. What, I pray you, has HOMER in common with MOSES? Suppose, I should affirm from the Greek History, That the ancient WORTHIES always proportioned their work to their strength and bulk; and that my Answerer was not in an humour to let this pass; but, to confute me, would press me with the high achievements of TOM THUMB, as they are recorded in his authentic story; who was as famed for his turbulence in king Arthur's Court, as Achilles was in Agamemnon's: Would not this be just as much to the purpose, as to put the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in parallel with the *Law* and the *Prophets*?

But Homer's poems have been so long called the *Bible of the Pagans*, that this Answerer appears, in good earnest, to have taken them for *religious History*; otherwise how could it have ever entered into his head to make so ridiculous a comparison? My reasoning with regard to SCRIPTURE stood thus. — As all good History deals with the motives of men's actions, so the peculiar business (as it seems to me) of *religious History* is to scrutinize their *religious Motives*: Of these, the principal is the consideration of a Future state. And this not being so much as once mentioned in the ancient Jewish History, it is natural to conclude that the Jews of those times had it not. But now, what has Homer's poems to do in this matter? I apprehend they are no *religious History*; but compositions as far removed from it as possible, namely a *military* and *civil* Romance, brim-full of fabulous trumpery. Now in such a work, the writer surely would be principally solicitous about the *civil* motives of his Actors. And Homer, who is confessed to understand what belonged to every kind of Composition, would take care to keep within his subject; and, to preserve decorum, would content himself with supplying his Warriors and Politicians with such motives as might best set off their Wisdom and their Heroism: such as the *love of power*, in which I comprise, revenge on their Enemies; the *love of plunder*, in which is included their passion for fair Captives; and the *love of glory*, in which, if you please, you may reckon their regard for their Friends and their Country. — But in Homer's military and political Romances there are hardly



But this is not all. For we find, that when a future state became a popular doctrine amongst the Jewish People (the time and occasion of which will be explained hereafter) that then it made as considerable a figure in their Annals, by influencing their determinations<sup>1</sup>, as it did in the history of any other people.

Nor is it only on the silence of the sacred Writers, or of the speakers they introduce, that I support this conclusion; but from their positive declarations; in which they plainly discover that there was no popular expectation of a future state, or Resurrection. Thus the woman of Tekoah to David: *For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again*<sup>2</sup>. Thus Job: *As the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more*<sup>3</sup>. And again: "There is hope of a  
" tree,

*six instances in which a future state is mentioned as the extref motive; therefore the perpetual silence on this point, in the religious History of the Jews, and the perpetual mention of it in the religious Histories of the SUEVI and the SARACENS, conclude nothing in favour of the argument of the Divine Legation.*

<sup>1</sup> See the second book of Maccabees.  
xiv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 SAM.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vii. ver. 9. To this Dr. Stebbing objects, that "it means no more than that man was not to be restored to his earthly human state." Exam. p. 60, and to confirm this, he appeals to the tenth verse of this chapter, which runs thus, *He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more*. But the learned Doctor should have reflected, that if Job says the dead man returns no more to his house, he gives a reason for his so saying, very inconsistent with the Doctor's interpretation of the 9th verse of the viith chapter. It was, because the dead man was got into the land of darkness and the shadow of death [chap. x. 21.] it was because he was not awake



“ tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again  
 “ —though the root thereof wax old in the earth,  
 “ and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet  
 “ through the scent of water, it will bud and  
 “ bring forth boughs like a plant. But man  
 “ dieth and wasteth away : yea, man giveth up the  
 “ ghost, and where is he ? As the waters fall from  
 “ the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up :  
 “ so man lieth down and riseth not till the Hea-  
 “ vens be no more, they shall not awake nor be  
 “ raised out of their sleep<sup>1</sup>.” Here the Jewish  
 Writer, for such he was, as shall be shewn here-  
 after (and might, indeed, be understood to be such  
 from this declaration alone) opposes the revival of  
 a *vegetable* to the irrecoverable death of a ratio-  
 nal *animal*. Had he known as much as St. Paul,  
 he had doubtless used that circumstance in the  
*vegetable* world (as St. Paul did) to prove analogi-  
 cally, the revival of the rational *animal*.

The Psalmist says, *In death there is no remem-  
 brance of thee : in the grave who shall give thee  
 thanks*<sup>2</sup> ? And again : *What profit is there in my  
 blood, when I go down to the pit ? Shall the dust  
 praise thee, shall it declare thy truth*<sup>3</sup> ? And again,  
 “ Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ? Shall  
 “ the dead ARISE and praise thee ? Shall thy lov-

*nor could be raised out of his sleep* [Chap. xiv. 12.] But the very  
 subject which Job is here treating confutes the Doctor's interpre-  
 tation : He is complaining that life is short, and that after death  
*he shall no more see good*, for that he *who goeth down to the grave  
 shall come up no more ; he shall return no more to his house* [ver. 7,  
 8, 9, 10.] which at least *implies* that there was no good to be  
 expected any where, but in this world : And this expectation is  
 cut off in *express terms*.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiv. ver. 7—12.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. vi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ps.

xxx. 9.

“ ing

“ing kindness be declared in the grave, or thy  
 “faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders  
 “be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in  
 “the land of forgetfulness?”

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes is still more express: *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a REWARD, for the memory of them is forgotten*<sup>2</sup>.

Hezekiah, in his song of Thanksgiving for his miraculous recovery, speaks in the same strain:  
 “For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot  
 “celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit  
 “cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the  
 “living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day:  
 “The father to the children shall make known  
 “thy truth<sup>3</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> PSALM lxxxviii. 10—12.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ix. ver. 5. To this sense of the text, Dr. Stebbing objects, and says, that *by no reward is meant none in this world*. Exam. p. 63—4. and in support of his interpretation, quotes the words of the verse immediately following—*neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun*. Now I agree with the learned Doctor that these words are an explanation of the foregoing, of the *dead's not having any more a reward*: and from thence draw just the contrary inference, That the sacred writer, from the consideration of the dead's not returning to life to enjoy their reward, concluded that, when once death had seized them, they could have no reward at all; not even that imaginary one, the living in the memory of men, *for the memory of them (says he) is forgotten*. So again from the consideration in ver. 6. that the dead *had neither love, hatred nor envy*, he had concluded ver. 5. that *THEY KNEW NOT ANY THING*.—But the *premises* and the *conclusion* not being in their usual order, our learned Doctor's Logic did not reach to take the force of the Preacher's.

<sup>3</sup> Is. xxxviii. 18, 19.



Lastly Jeremiah, in his *Lamentations* and complaints of the people, says: OUR FATHERS HAVE SINNED AND ARE NOT, AND WE HAVE BORN THEIR INIQUITIES <sup>b</sup>. Which implies, that the fathers being dead bore no part of the punishment of their sins, but that all was thrown upon the children. But could this have been supposed, had the People been instructed in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments:

Yet a learned *Answerer*, in contradiction to all this, thinks it sufficient to say, That “these passages may imply no more than that the dead cannot set forth God’s glory *before men*, or make his “praise to be known *upon earth*.” Now I think it must needs *imply* something more, since the *dead* are said to be unable to do this under the earth as well as upon it. For it is the *Grave* which is called the *land of forgetfulness*, or that where all things are forgotten. And in another place it is said, *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence* <sup>d</sup>. Surely, a plain intimation that all intercourse of praise between man and his Maker ceased on death, as well below ground as above; otherwise why did the sacred writer tell us it was the *Grave* which was the place of *silence* to the dead? If the *Answerer*’s interpretation be right, *this world*, and not the other, was the place. Had the Psalmist supposed, as the Doctor does, that the *dead* continued in a capacity of *remembering the goodness of God*, this remembrance could be no where more quickly or forceably excited than in that World where the divine goodness is clearly unveiled to the *spirits of just men made perfect* <sup>e</sup>? On the con-

<sup>b</sup> Chap. v. ver. 7.  
64.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. cxv. 17.

<sup>e</sup> Dr. Stebbing’s Exam. &c. p.  
<sup>e</sup> Heb. xii. 23.

trary,



trary, the *Grave* is uniformly represented by all of them, as the *land of darkness, silence, and forgetfulness*.

But since, of all the sacred writers, the Psalmist is he who is supposed by the adversaries of the D. L. to have most effectually confuted the Author's system, I shall quote a passage from his hymns which, I think, fairly enough decides the controversy.—Hitherto we have only heard him say, that the *dead forget God*; we shall now find him go further, and say that *God forgets them*.—“ I am counted with them that go down into the pit—FREE amongst the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, *whom thou rememberest no more*: and THEY ARE CUT OFF FROM THY HAND<sup>f</sup>. Let the serious reader take notice of the last words,—*they* [the dead] *are cut from thy hand*, i. e. they are no longer the object of thy Providence or moral Government. On this account it is, that in the beginning of the sentence he calls these *dead FREE*; that is, manumitted, set at liberty; in the same sense that Uzziah the leper's *freedom* is spoken of by the sacred historian.—*And Uzziah the King was a Leper, and dwelt in a several house* [or, as the margin of our translation tells us, it signifies in the hebrew, a *FREE HOUSE*, or *house of freedom*] *being a Leper, for he was CUT OFF from the house of the Lord*. The phrase of *cutting off*, &c. signifying the same in both places, the taking away all intercourse and relation between two: And if that intercourse consisted in *service* on the one side, and protection on the other, as between Lord and Subject, Master and Servant, he who owed *service*

<sup>f</sup> Ps. lxxxviii. 4—5.

is with great propriety of figure said to be FREE or MANUMISED. Hezekiah, as quoted above, delivers the very same sentiment, tho' in a different expression—*they that go down into the pit cannot hope for THY TRUTH.* What this truth is, the following words declare,—*the living, the living, they shall praise thee.* THE FATHER TO THE CHILDREN SHALL MAKE KNOWN THY TRUTH. As much as to say, “the truth not to be hoped for by them who go down into the pit, is *The nature and the history of God's Dispensation to his chosen people;*” in which, by a particular precept of the LAW, the Fathers were commanded to instruct their Children. Thus the Psalmist and this other Jewish Ruler agree in this principle, that the Dead are no longer the objects of God's general Providence, or of his particular: which evinces what I was to prove, “THAT THE BODY OF THE EARLY JEWS HAD NO EXPECTATIONS OF A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.” And here let me take notice of a passage which the contenders for the contrary Doctrine much confide in. It is where David, speaking of his dead child, says, *I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.* But whither was he to follow his departed child? He himself tells you,—into a land of *darkness, silence and forgetfulness,* where he was to be no longer in a capacity of remembering the goodness and mercy of God, or even of being remembered by him; but was to be cut off from his hand, that is, was to be no longer the object of his Providence or moral Government.

To proceed. If now we set all these passages together, we find it to be the same language throughout, and in every circumstance of life; as well in the cool philosophy of the author of Eccle-



Ecclesiastes, as amidst the distresses of the Psalmist, and the exultations of good Hezekiah.

But could this language have been used by a People instructed in the doctrine of life and immortality? or do we find one word of it, on any occasion whatever, in the Writers of the New Testament, but where it is brought in to be confuted and condemned?\*

All this, to thoughtful men, will, I suppose, be deemed convincing. Whence it follows that their subterfuge is quite cut off, who pretend, that Moses did not indeed propagate the Doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments in *writing*, but that he delivered it to TRADITION, which conveyed it safely down through all the ages of the Jewish Dispensation, from one end of it to the other. For we see, he was so far from teaching it, that he studiously contrived to keep it out of sight; nay provided for the want of it: and the people were so far from being influenced by it, that they had not even the idea of it. Yet the writers of the Church of Rome have taken advantage of this silence in the Law of Moses concerning a future state, to advance the honour of TRADITION: For, not seeing the doctrine in the WRITTEN LAW, and fancying they saw a necessity that the Jews should have it, they concluded (to save the credit of the Jewish Church and to advance the credit of their own) that Moses had carefully inculcated it, in the TRADITIONAL. This weighty point, Father Simon proves by the *second book of Maccabees*; and triumphs over the

\* “*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*” *Ecce non de-*  
 ceived: evil communications corrupt good manners, &c.”  
 1 Cor. xv. 32.



Protestants and Socinians (as he call them) for their folly in throwing that book out of the Canon, and thereby disabling themselves from proving a future state, from the old Testament <sup>h</sup>.

A very worthy protestant Bishop does as much honour to *Tradition*, in his way. In some *Miscellanies* of the Bishop of Cloyne, published in 1752, we find these words—"Moses, indeed, doth not *insist on a future state*, THE COMMON BASIS OF ALL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.—The belief of a future state (which it is manifest the Jews were possessed of *long before the coming of Christ*) seems to have obtained amongst the Hebrews from primæval TRADITION, which might render it unnecessary for Moses to *insist on that article* <sup>i</sup>." Though the Bishop has not the merit of saying this with a professed design, like Father Simon, *pour appuyer la Tradition*, yet the Church of Rome has not the less obligation to him for assigning so much virtue to this their powerful assistant, which has conveyed to them all they want; and indeed most of what they have. But if the *traditional* doctrine of a future state prevailed amongst the Jews, in the time of Moses, and that he would trust to the same conveyance,

<sup>h</sup> Monf. Simon avoit dit, *pour appuyer la Tradition*, que la resurrection des corps ne peut se demontrer par le Vieux Testament—ces expressions plus claires de la resurrection & du siecle à venir, qui se trouvent dans le *second Livre Maccabees*, sont une preuve evidente que les Juifs avoient une Tradition touchant la Resurrection, dont il n'est fait aucune mention dans les anciens livres de l'Ecriture. Les Protestans & les Sociniens qui ne reçoivent point les *Maccabees* ne pourront pas la prouver solidement par le Vieux Testament. *Pere Simon, Reponse au Sentimens de quelques Theologiens de Hollande*, &c. p. 39.

<sup>i</sup> Page 68.

for the safe delivery of it down to the times of Christ, how came it to pass that he did his best to weaken the efficacy, by studiously contriving to draw men off, as it were, from the Doctrine, and always representing it under the impenetrable cover of temporal rewards and punishments?

2. If a future state obtained by *Tradition*, What occasion was there for the Law of punishing the transgression of the parent upon the children?

3. If it obtained by *Tradition*, How happened it that the Jews are not represented in their History sometimes at least, as acting on the motives, and influenced by the prospect of a future state, and expressing their hopes concerning it like the rest of mankind, who had it by *Tradition*, or otherwise?

4. If it obtained by *Tradition*, How came HEZEKIAH to say, that *they who go down into the pit cannot hope for the truth*: and DAVID, to represent the dead as going into the place of *silence and forgetfulness*, where they were no longer to praise and celebrate the goodness of God? On the contrary are there not passages in the books of SOLOMON and JOB, which plainly shew that no such tradition obtained in their respective times?

5. If it obtained by *Tradition*, What occasion for the administration of an extraordinary Providence under the Law? Or from whence arose the embarrass of DAVID and JEREMIAH (not to speak of the disputants in the book of JOB) to account for the prosperity of some wicked Individuals, in the present life? In a word, to the maintainers of this *Tradition* may be very appositely applied



applied the words of Jesus to the *Traditionists* in general, when he told them, *they made the word of God of none effect through their traditions*. For certainly, if any thing can render that *word of God* which brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, of none effect, it is the pretended PRIMAÆVAL TRADITION which the good Bishop so much insists upon.

The learned Prelate indeed observes, that *the Jews were possessed of a future state long before the coming of Christ*. But what is this to the purpose, if it can be shewn, that the knowledge of it might be obtained from a quarter very distant from the old hebrew *Traditions*; and especially if from the colour and complexion of the Doctrine, it can be shewn, that it did, in fact, come from a distant quarter? namely, from their Pagan neighbours; patched up out of some dark and scattered insinuations of their own Prophets, and varnished over with the metaphorical expressions employed to convey them. But not to anticipate what I have to say on this head in the last volume, I proceed in the course of my argument.

## S E C T. VI.

WHAT is yet of greatest weight, the inspired writers of the *New Testament* expressly assure us that the doctrine of a future State of reward and punishment did not make part of the Mosaic Dispensation.

Their evidence may be divided into *two* parts. In the first, they prove that *temporal* Rewards and Punishments were the sanction of the Mosaic Dispensation: and in the second, that it had no OTHER.



I. St. PAUL, in his epistle to Timothy, enforcing, against certain judaizing Christians, the advantages of moral above ritual observances, says, "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come<sup>k</sup>." That is, though numerous ritual observances were enjoined by the Law, and some there must needs be under the Gospel wherever there is a Christian Church, yet they are of little advantage in comparison of moral virtue; for that, under both Religions, the rewards proper to each, were annexed only to *godliness*: that is to say, under the Jewish, the reward of *the life that now is*; under the Christian, of that *which is to come*. This interpretation, which shews *temporal rewards* to be foreign to the nature of the Christian Œconomy, I support,

I. From other passages of the same Writer, where he expressly informs us that Christians have not the promise of the *life that now is*. For to the Corinthians he says, speaking of the condition of the followers of CHRIST, *If in this life only we have hope in CHRIST, we are of all men most miserable<sup>l</sup>*. To understand the force of which words, we must consider, that they were addressed to Jewish Converts tainted with Sadducism, who argued from the Mosaic Dispensation to the Christian: And holding that there was no future state in the former, concluded by analogy, that there was none in the latter. The argument on which they built their first Position was, that the sanctions of the Law were temporal rewards and punishments. Our Apostle therefore argues with them, as is his usual

<sup>k</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 8.<sup>l</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 19.

way, on their own principles. " You deny, says he, a resurrection from the dead, or a future state of reward and punishment. And why? Because there is no such doctrine in the Law. How do you prove it? Because the sanctions of the Law are temporal rewards and punishments. Agreed. And now on your own principle I confute your conclusion. You own that the Jews had an equivalent for future rewards and punishment, namely the present. But Christians have no equivalent, So far from that, *they are*, with regard to this world only, *of all men most miserable*; having therefore no equivalent for the rewards a future state, they must needs be entitled to them." This shews the superior force of the Apostle's reasoning. And from hence it appears not only that Christians HAD NOT, but that the Jews HAD the promise of the Life that now is.

2. If we understand the *promise of the life that now is* to extend to the Christian Dispensation, we destroy the strength and integrity of St. Paul's argument. He is here reasoning against judaizing Christians. So that his business is to shew, that *godliness*, in every state, and under every Dispensation unto which they imagined themselves bound, had the advantage of *bodily exercise* <sup>m</sup>.

The

<sup>m</sup> To all this, it hath been said, — " Christians have the promise of the life that now is, excepting the case of persecution, Mark x. 30." The words of Jesus in the Evangelist are, — *there is no one that hath LEFT house or brethren, &c. for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses and lands, &c. with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life.* But these words evidently allude to the first Followers of Jesus, while the Church was under an extraordinary Providence, that is, during the Age of Miracles; and

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews speaking of JESUS says: *After the similitude of Melchisedec there appeareth another Priest, who is made not after the LAW OF A CARNAL COMMANDMENT, but after the power of an endless life.* The Jewish Religion, called a *carnal commandment*, is here opposed to the christian, called *the power of an endless life*. By *carnal commandments* then must needs be understood a Law promising carnal things, or the things of this life.

II. That the Moïaic Dispensation had ONLY the sanction of *temporal* rewards and punishments, or that it taught not *future*, let us hear St. John; who in the beginning of his Gospel assures us, that *the LAW was given by Moïes, but that GRACE and TRUTH came by Jesus Christ*°. As certain then as the *Law* did not come by Jesus Christ, so certain is it, according to this Apostle, that *Grace and Truth* did not come by Moïes. This *Grace* and *Truth* cannot be understood generically; for, the *grace* or favour of God was bestowed on the chosen race, and *truth*, or the revealed will of God, *did come* by Moïes. It must therefore be some *species* of *grace* and *truth*, of which the Apostle here predicates; the publication of which species constitutes what is called the Gospel. And this all know to be redemption from death, and restoration to eternal life.

and as that sort of Dispensation is always aided by the course of natural and civil events, we easily see how it would be promoted by LEAVING a country doomed to the most horrid and exterminating destruction. But St. Paul, where he assigns only *the life which is to come* to the followers of the Gospel, is speaking of a different thing, namely of the genius of the Christian Dispensation in general, as it is opposed to Judaism.

° Chap. vii. ver. 13, 16.

° Chap. i. ver. 17.

Again,



Again, to this part likewise, let us once more hear the learned Apostle: *As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: for until the Law, sin was in the world, but Sin is not imputed where there is no Law. Nevertheless Death reigned from Adam to Moses*<sup>p</sup>. It is St. Paul's purpose to shew, that death came by ADAM through sin, and so passed upon all men; and that life came by JESUS CHRIST: But having said that Sin, which brings forth Death, is not imputed where there is no Law, lest this should seem to contradict what he had said of Death's passing upon *all men*, he adds, *nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses*; taking it for granted that his followers would understand it must needs reign from Moses to CHRIST, as having made *Sin's being imputed* to consist in there being a LAW given. Now I ask how the Apostle could possibly say, *that Death reigned under the Mosaic Dispensation*, if that People had the knowledge of immortal life to be procured by a Redeemer to come, any more than it can be said to *reign now* with the same knowledge of a Redeemer past; since we agree that the efficacy of his death extends to all preceding as well as succeeding Ages? Accordingly in his epistle to the Corinthians he calls the Jewish Law, the MINISTRATION OF DEATH, and the MINISTRATION OF CONDEMNATION<sup>q</sup>.

2. In his epistle to the Galatians, he says,—*Before FAITH came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the FAITH which should afterwards be revealed*<sup>r</sup>. i. e. we were kept in subjection to the

<sup>p</sup> ROM. v. 12, & seq.

<sup>q</sup> 2 COR. iii. 7, & seq.

<sup>r</sup> GAL. iii. 23.

Law of Moses; and, by that means, shut up and sequestered from the rest of the Nations, to be prepared and made ready for the first reception of the FAITH, when it should in God's appointed time be revealed unto men. From these words therefore it appears, that till that time, the Jews had no knowledge of this FAITH. So much we must have concluded tho' he had not said, as he does afterwards, That till that time, the Jews *were in bondage under the elements of this world*<sup>a</sup>. Now could men acquainted with the doctrine of *life and immortality* be said, with any sense or propriety, to be in such a state of bondage? For though men in bondage may have an idea of Liberty, yet of THIS LIBERTY they could have no idea without understanding, at the same time, that they were partakers of its benefits.

3. In his second epistle to Timothy he expressly says, *That JESUS CHRIST HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL*<sup>b</sup>. But now if *Death* were abolished by JESUS CHRIST, it is certain it had reigned till his coming: and yet it is as certain, that it could reign no longer than while the tidings of the Gospel were kept back; because we agree that CHRIST's death hath a retrospect operation: therefore those under the Law had no knowledge of life and immortality. Again: *If life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel*, consequently, till the preaching of the Gospel, it was kept hid and out of sight<sup>c</sup>. But if taught by Moses and the Prophets,  
it

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iv. ver. 3.

<sup>b</sup> 2 TIM. i. 10.

<sup>c</sup> The serious reader, who considers all this, will not be a little surprised to hear that eminent Scholar and Divine, Dr. S. Clarke,



it was *not brought to light through the Gospel*: therefore the generality of those under the Law had no knowledge of a future state. But Scripture is ever consistent, though mens systems be not. And for this reason we find that *life and immortality*, which is here said to be *brought to light through the Gospel*, is so often called the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL<sup>x</sup>: that is, a *mystery* till

S. Clarke, talk in the following manner, where, after having spoken of the doubts and uncertainties of the ancient Philosophers concerning a future state, he concludes in these words, — “From all which it appears that notwithstanding all the bright arguments and acute conclusions and brave sayings of the best Philosophers, yet *life and immortality* were not FULLY and SATISFACTORILY brought to light by BARE NATURAL REASON.” — [Ev. of nat. and rev. Religion, p. 146.] — It would be very strange if they had; since Scripture is so far from allowing any part of this discovery to *natural reason*, that it will not admit even the Mosaic Revelation to a share, but reserves it all for the Gospel of CHRIST: so that had natural Religion brought *life and immortality to light*, though not *fully and satisfactorily*, the learned Apostle would be found to have spoken much too highly of the prerogatives of the Gospel.

The truth is, the very learned Writer had two points to make out, in this famous work; the one was the *evidence of natural Religion*; and, under that head, he is to shew, that it taught life and immortality. His other point was, the *evidence of revealed Religion*, and there, (to shew its use and necessity) he is to demonstrate that bare natural reason could not discover life and immortality. Thus the very method of his demonstration obliged him, in the former part, to give to natural Religion an honour which, in the latter part, he was forced to take away: and to reconcile them with one another, was the purpose of the conciliating words above — *yet life and immortality were not FULLY and SATISFACTORILY brought to light by bare natural reason*: which indeed does the business; but it is at the expence of the learned Apostle, who says it was not brought to light at all, till the preaching of the Gospel.

<sup>x</sup> EPH. vi. 19. — To this it has been said, “that the *mystery of the Gospel* here mentioned, is rather that which is meant by the  
the



till this promulgation of it by the disciples of CHRIST: *Which had been hid from ages and from generations, but was then made manifest unto the Saints*<sup>1</sup>. The term was borrowed from those famous Rites of Paganism, so named; and is applied with admirable justness. For as the *Mysteries* were communicated only to a few of the wise and great, and kept hid from the populace: so *life and immortality*, as we shall see, was revealed by GOD, as a special favour, to the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, but kept hid from the body of the Jewish Nation.

4. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says: THAT THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT, BUT THE BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE DID<sup>2</sup>. Now, that could not be said to be *brought in*, which was there before. And had it been there before, the *Law*, it seems, had been perfect; and, consequently, would have superseded the use of the *Gospel*. Therefore this *better hope*, namely of immortality in a future state, is not in the Mosaic Dispensation. Let us observe farther, that as the *Gospel*, by bringing in a *better hope*, made the *Law perfect*, it appears, there was that relation between the *Law* and *Gospel* which is between the beginning and the completion of any matter. From whence these two consequences follow: 1. That the *Law* wanted something which the *Gospel* supplied: And what was that something but the doctrine

the word, chap. iii. 3—9. namely the calling in of the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs with the Jews."—For a confutation of this absurd fancy, read — *The free and candid examination of the principles advanced by the Lord Bishop of London*, chap. i. p. 24. & seq. where the learned and most judicious Author has sufficiently exploded it.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. vii. ver. 19.

of a future State? 2. That the Law must needs make some preparation for that *better hope* which the Gospel was to bring in. What it was, the same writer tells us, namely, That *it had* A SHADOW [σκιαν] *of good things to come*, but *not the* VERY IMAGE [εἰκόνα] *of the things*<sup>a</sup>. Hence it is evident that by this *shadow* is meant such a typical representation, so faintly delineated, as not to be perceived by vulgar eyes, intent only on a carnal Dispensation. This was contrived for admirable purposes: For if, instead of a *shadow* or faint outline of a design, the Image itself, in full relief, had glaringly held forth the object intended, this object, so distinctly defined, would have drawn the Jews from that Œconomy to which it was God's pleasure they should long continue in subjection: And had there been no delineation at all, to become stronger in a clearer light, one illustrious evidence of the Dependency between the two Religions, had been wanting.

Again, the same Writer, to the same purpose, speaking of CHRIST says, *But now hath he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon BETTER PROMISES. For if the first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been found for the Second*<sup>b</sup>. 1. We see that this *better Covenant* was established by CHRIST, and not by Moses. 2. If the first Covenant had been faultless, that is, had contained *better promises*, or taught the doctrine of a future state, there had been no room for a Second.

To sum up all, This admirable writer gives in the last place, the fullest evidence to both parts of

<sup>a</sup> Chap. x. ver. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. viii. ver. 6, 7.



the proposition, namely "That temporal rewards and punishments were the sanction of the Jewish Dispensation; and that it had no other." For in the second chapter we find these remarkable assertions.

Ver. 2. *For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience RECEIVED A JUST RECOMPENSE OF REWARD, How shall we escape, &c.*

Ver. 5. *For unto the Angels hath he not put in subjection the WORLD TO COME, whereof we speak.*

Ver. 14—15. *He [Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same [flesh and blood] that thro' death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the Devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were ALL THEIR LIFE-TIME subject to bondage.*

Let us lay these three texts together. And we shall find, 1. from ver. 2. that the sanction of the Law, or *the word spoken by angels*, was of a temporal nature—*every transgression received a just recompence.* 2. From ver. 5. that the Law taught no future state—*the world to come not being put in subjection to these angels.* And 3. from ver. 14—15. that the people had not the knowledge of such a state—*being all their life-time subject to bondage.* For the Devil is here said to have *power of death*, as he brought it into the world by the delusion of the FIRST MAN. Therefore, before death can be abolished, *He*, who had the power of it, must be destroyed. But his destruction is the work of the SECOND MAN. Till his coming therefore, the Jews, as we are here told, *were through fear of death all their life time subject to bondage.* Christ then



brought them into *the glorious liberty of the children of God*<sup>c</sup> by setting before them *life and immortality*<sup>d</sup>.

To all this, I hope, the reader will not be so inattentive to object, "That what is here produced from the New Testament to prove that the followers of the Law had no future state, contradicts what I have more than once observed, That the later Jewish Prophets had given strong intimations of an approaching Dispensation, with a future state." For the question is concerning a future state's being the Sanction of the LAW, not of later intimations, of its being ready to become the sanction of the GOSPEL.

As inconsiderate would be this other objection, "That my point is to prove that this Dispensation had *no future state of reward and punishment at all*, and my evidence from the New Testament only shews they had not the *christian Doctrine of it*." For to this I answer, 1. That those I argue with, if they hold any difference between the Christian and general Doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment, it is only this, that the Christian Doctrine was *revealed*; the other, a conclusion of natural reason. Now if the Jews had this Doctrine, they must needs have it, as *revealed*; consequently the same with the Christian. 2. That though I myself suppose the natural and the christian Doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment to be very different things; yet I shall

<sup>c</sup> ROM. viii. 21.

<sup>d</sup> For the further illustration of this matter, I would recommend to the Reader's serious perusal the first chapter of the *free and candid examination of the Bishop of London's Principles*.

shew,

shew, in due time, that if Moses were indeed God's Messenger, and would teach a future state, it could be no other than the *Christian* Doctrine of it. But as those, I have to do with, may be ready to tell me, that this *due time*, like that of the *Jews' Messiah*, is either past or will never come, they will, I suppose, readily bear with me while I anticipate the subject, and in a very few words prove what is here asserted. Revelation teacheth that mankind lost the free gift of immortal life by the transgression of Adam; and, from thence, became mortal, and their existence confined to this life. Revelation likewise teacheth that the MEAN which Divine Wisdom thought fit to employ in restoring man from death to his first state of immortality, was *the sacrifice of Christ on the cross*. Hence it appears to be a thing impossible, that any Messenger from God, any Agent or Instrument made use of for conducting this grand Dispensation towards its completion, could (were it in his *choice* or in his *office* to promulgate the doctrine of a future State) speak of any other but that purchased by Christ, and promulged and proclaimed in the Gospel, since in fact, on the principles of Revelation, there is no other; and to inculcate another, would be impeaching the veracity of God, and the eternal stability of his councils.

To conclude, There is one thing which plainly evinceth that if the Jews had the knowledge or belief of a FUTURE STATE of reward and punishment, they must have had the knowledge of the REDEMPTION of man by the death and suffering of Jesus Christ, likewise. And it is this, That all the Sacrifices in the Jewish Ritual regarded only temporal things. A very competent judge in these matters assures us, — *Univerſa Judæorum ſimul*



congesta Sacrificia ad assequenda hujus vitæ com-  
moda omnia facta erant\*. The consequence is this,  
That if the Jewish religion taught its followers a  
future state of rewards and punishments, it either  
afforded them no means of attaining future happi-  
ness, or it instructed them in the doctrine of the  
Redemption. To say the first, contradicts the na-  
ture of all Religion; to say the latter, makes the  
Jewish useless, and the Christian false, as contra-  
dicting its repeated declarations, that *life and im-  
mortality*, or the doctrine of the Redemption, was  
*brought to light through the Gospel.*

But what was asked by St. Paul's Adversaries,  
will perhaps be asked by mine, *Is the LAW then  
against the PROMISES of God?* Or does the LAW,  
because it had no future state, contradict the Gos-  
PEL, which hath? The Apostle's answer will serve  
me,—*God forbid: For if there had been a LAW  
which could have given life, verily righteousness should  
have been by the LAW*†. That is, if the genius of  
the Law had produced such a Dispensation as was  
proper to convey to mankind the free gift of life  
and immortality, this gift would have been con-  
veyed by it. All this shews that the Law was not  
*contrary* to the Gospel, but only that it was not of  
sufficient excellence to be the vehicle of God's last  
best gift to mankind. And it shews too (and it is  
a very fit remark, as the result from the whole,  
with which to conclude this fifth *Book*) that a  
future state was not the Sanction of the Law of  
Moses, or, in the Apostle's more emphatic words,  
that the *Law did not* (because it could not) *give life.*

Thus, I presume, it is now proved beyond all  
reasonable question, THAT THE DOCTRINE OF A

\* Outram de Sacr. p. 305,

† GAL. iii. 21.



FUTURE STATE OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN, NOR DID MAKE PART OF, THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

It will be asked then, "What were the real sentiments of these early Jews concerning the soul?" Though the question be a little out of time, yet as the answer is short, I shall give it here. They were doubtless the same with those of the rest of mankind, who have thought upon the matter; that IT SURVIVED THE BODY: But having, from Moses's silence and the establishment of another Sanction, no expectation of future rewards and punishments, they simply concluded that *it returned to him who gave it*<sup>e</sup>. But, as to any interesting speculations concerning its state of survivorship, 'tis plain they had none. Indeed how should they have any? when PERSONALITY did not enter into the idea of this *survivorship*, that being only annexed to the *rewards and punishments* of a future state. Hence it was that those ancient Philosophers (almost all the theistical Philosophers of Greece) who considered the soul as a SUBSTANCE distinct from the body, and not a mere QUALITY of it, (for they were not such idiots as to conceive, that *thought* could result from any combinations of *matter and motion*) those Philosophers, I say, who considered the soul as a substance, and yet disbelieved a future state of rewards and punishments, denied it all future *personality*, and held the refusion of it into the  $\tau\omicron\ \psi$ , or the soul of the world<sup>f</sup>. And just such INTERESTING SPECULATIONS concerning it had the few philosophic Jews of the most early times, as appears from the book of Ecclesiastes, which speaks their sentiments. *Who knoweth* (says this author)

<sup>e</sup> EccLES. xii. 7.

<sup>f</sup> See Div. Log. vol. i. b. 3.

*the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth*<sup>1</sup>? And again: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, AND THE SPIRIT SHALL RETURN UNTO GOD WHO GAVE IT<sup>k</sup>." Yet this writer, perfectly conformable to what I have delivered, says, at the same time: *But the dead know not any thing, neither have they ANY MORE A REWARD, for the memory of them is forgotten*<sup>l</sup>.

And where was the wonder? that a matter which so little concerned them, namely, the future condition of a portion of etherial Spirit divested of its Personality, should only float idly in the brain, when we reflect that even the knowledge of the FIRST CAUSE OF ALL THINGS, while he made no part of the *National Worship*, was entertained by the Gentiles (as appears from all Antiquity) with the utmost unconcern, neither regulating their notions nor influencing their actions.

But from this uninteresting state, in which the Doctrine, concerning the Soul, remained amongst the early Jews, the SADDUCEES concluded that their Ancestors believed the *extinction* of the soul on death. Hence likewise came some late Revivers of this opinion, of the *extinction of the soul*; tho' maintained under the softer name of its SLEEP between death and the resurrection: For they go upon the Sadducean principle, that the soul is a *quality* only, and not a *substance*.

In support of this opinion, the Revivers of it proceed on the sophism, which Polytheists employ

<sup>i</sup> Chap. iii. ver. 21. Vid. Cleric. & Drusum in loc.  
<sup>k</sup> Chap. xii. ver. 7. Vid. Clericum in loc.  
<sup>l</sup> Chap. ix. ver. 5.



to combat the unity of the Godhead. *All Philosophical arguments* (says the Reviver, after having quoted a number of wonderful things from Scripture, to prove the soul a *quality*, and mortal) *drawn from our notions of matter, and urged against the possibility of life, thought, and agency, being so connected with some portions of it as to constitute a compound Being or Person, are merely grounded on our ignorance*<sup>m</sup>. Just so the Polytheist. "All arguments for the Unity, from metaphysics, are manifestly vain, and merely grounded on our ignorance. You Believers (says he) must be confined to Scripture: Now Scripture assures us, THERE ARE GODS MANY," which, by the way, I think a stronger text, certainly a directer, against the unity of the Godhead, than any this learned Writer has produced for the *sleep of the Soul*. But what say Believers to this? They say, that Scripture takes the unity, as well as the *existence* of the Deity, for granted; takes them for truths, demonstrable by natural light. Just so it is with regard to that *immaterial substance*, the Soul. Scripture supposes men to be so far informed of the nature of the Soul, by the same light, as to know that it cannot be destroyed by any of those causes which bring about the extinction of the body. Our Dreamers<sup>n</sup> are aware of this, and therefore hold with Unbelievers, that the Soul is *no substance*, but a *quality* only; and so have taken effectual care indeed, that its repose shall not be disturbed in this, which we may emphatically call, the SLEEP OF DEATH. *We can never prove*, (says another of these sleepers<sup>o</sup>) *that the Soul of man is of such a nature*

<sup>m</sup> *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, p. 398. Ed. 3d.

<sup>n</sup> St. Jude's *filthy dreamers* only *defiled the Flesh*. These *defile the Spirit*.

<sup>o</sup> Taylor of Norwich.



that it can and must exist and live, think, act, enjoy, &c. separate from, and independent of, the body. All our present experience shews the contrary. The operations of the mind depend CONSTANTLY and INVARIABLY upon the state of the body, of the brain in particular. If some dying persons have a lively use of their rational faculties to the very last, it is because death has invaded some other part, and the brain remains sound and vigorous<sup>p</sup>. This is the long-exploded trash of Coward, Toland, Collins, &c. And he who can treat us with it at this time of day, has either never read CLARKE and BAXTER on the subject, (in which, he had been better employed than in writing upon it) or never understood them.—So far as to the abstract truth. Let us consider next the practical consequences. Convince the philosophic Libertine that the Soul is a quality arising out of *matter*, and vanishing on the dissolution of the *form*, and then see if ever you can bring him to believe the Christian Doctrine of the RESURRECTION? While he held the Soul to be an immaterial substance, existing, as well in its separation from, as in its conjunction with, the Body, and he could have no reason, arising from the principles of true Philosophy, to stagger in his belief of this revealed Doctrine.—*Thou fool that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die<sup>q</sup>*, is good philosophy as well as good divinity: for if the body, instead of its earthly nature were to have a heavenly, it must needs pass through death and corruption to qualify it for that change. But when this *body died*, what occasion was there for the *Soul*, which was to suffer no change, to *fall asleep*?

<sup>p</sup> Ib. p. 401.<sup>q</sup> St. Paul.

But their *sleep of the Soul* is mere cant: and this brings me to the last consideration, the sense and consistency of so ridiculous a notion. They go, as we observed, upon the Sadducean principle, that the Soul is a *quality* of Body, not a *substance* of itself, and so dies with its substratum. Now *sleep*, is a modification of Existence, not of non-existence; so that though the sleep of a *Substance* hath a meaning, the sleep of a *quality* is nonsense. And if ever this Soul of theirs re-exerts its faculties, in must be by means of a REPRODUCTION, not by a mere AWAKING; and they may as well talk of the SLEEP of a mushroom turned again into the substance of the dunghill from whence it arose, and from which, not the same, but another mushroom shall, in time, arise. In a word, neither Unbelievers nor Believers will allow to these *middle men* that a new-existing Soul, which is only a quality resulting from a glorified body, can be identically the same with an annihilated Soul, which had resulted from an earthly body. But perhaps, as Hudibras had discovered the Receptacle of the *ghosts of defunct bodies*, so these gentlemen may have found out the yet subtler corner, where the *ghosts of defunct qualities* repose.

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## A P P E N D I X.

A LATE noble and voluminous Author<sup>a</sup>, who hath written with more than ordinary spleen against THE RELIGION OF HIS COUNTRY, as it is founded in Revelation and established by Law, hath attacked with more than ordinary fury the Author of the *Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated*, and of the *Alliance between Church and State vindicated*.

I shall shortly find a fitter place to examine his reasoning against the *Alliance*. At present let us see what he has to urge against the argument of the *Divine Legation*, which is founded on these two facts, the *omission of the Doctrine of a future State of Rewards and Punishments* in the Mosaic Dispensation; and the *administration of an extraordinary Providence* in the same Dispensation.

His Lordship begins with the OMISSION, which he acknowledges: and to evade the force of the argument arising from it, casts about for a reason, independent of the EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE, to account for it.

His first solution is this, — “ MOSES DID NOT  
“ BELIEVE THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, NOR  
“ the rewards and punishments of another life,  
“ tho’ it is possible he might have learnt these

<sup>a</sup> L. BOLINGBROKE.

“ Doctrines

“ Doctrines from the Egyptians, WHO TAUGHT  
 “ THEM VERY EARLY, perhaps as they taught  
 “ that of the Unity of God. When I say, *that*  
 “ *Moses did not believe the immortality of the soul,*  
 “ nor future rewards and punishments, my reason  
 “ is this, that he taught neither, when *he had to*  
 “ *do with a people whom a Theocracy could not re-*  
 “ *strain*; and on whom, therefore, terrors of Pu-  
 “ nishment, *future as well as present, eternal as*  
 “ *well as temporary,* could never be too much  
 “ multiplied, or too strongly inculcated <sup>b</sup>.”

This reasoning is altogether worthy of his Lordship. Here we have a DOCTRINE, confessed to be plausible in itself, and therefore of easy admittance; most alluring to human nature, and therefore embraced by all mankind; of highest account among the Egyptians, and therefore ready to be embraced by the Israelites, who were fond of Egyptian notions; of strongest efficacy on the minds of an unruly People, and therefore of indispensable use; Yet, all this notwithstanding, *Moses did not believe it, and, on that account, would not teach it.*—But then, had MOSES’s integrity been so severe, How came he to write a History which, my Lord thinks, is, in part at least, a fiction of his own? Did he *believe* that? How came he to leave the Israelites, as my Lord assures us he did, in possession of many of the superstitious opinions of Egypt? did he *believe* these too? No, but they served his purpose; which was, The better governing an unruly People. Well, but his Lordship tells us, the doctrine of a future state served this purpose best of all; for *having to do with a People whom a Theocracy could not restrain, terrors of*

<sup>b</sup> Vol. iii. p. 289.

*punishment, future as well as present, eternal as well as temporary, could never be too much multiplied, or too strongly inculcated.* No matter for that. MOSES, as other men may, on a sudden grows scrupulous; and so, together with the maxims of common politics, throws aside the principles of common sense; and when he had employed all the other inventions of fraud, he boggles at this, which best served his purpose; was most innocent in itself; and was most important in its general, as well as particular use.

In his Lordship's next Volume, this *Omission* comes again upon the stage; and then we have *another* reason assigned for MOSES's conduct in this matter. "MOSES would not teach the Doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state, *on account of the many superstitions which this Doctrine had begot in Egypt, as we must believe, or believe that he knew nothing of it, or* " ASSIGN SOME WHIMSICAL REASON FOR HIS " OMISSION ".

We have seen before, that MOSES omitted a future state, *because he did not believe it.* This reason is now out of date; and one or other of the three following is to be assigned; either because it *begot superstitions*; or because *he knew nothing of it*; or if you will allow neither of these, you must have recourse, he tells you, to Warburton's WHIMSICAL REASON, that *the Jews were under an extraordinary Providence.*

Let us take him then, at his word, without expecting however, that he will stand to it; and



having shewn, his two first reasons not worth a rush, leave the last, established, even on his own concessions.

1. *Moses, says he, omitted a future state on account of the many superstitions, which this doctrine had begot in Egypt.* But if the omission stands upon this principle, MOSES must have omitted an infinite number of things, which, Lord Bolingbroke says, he borrowed of the Egyptians; part of which, in his Lordship's opinion, were those very superstitions, which this *Doctrine had begot*; such as the notion of TUTELARY DEITIES; and part, what arose out of that notion; in the number of which were *distinction between things clean and unclean*; an *hereditary Priesthood*; *sacerdotal habits*; and *Rites of sacrifice*.

2. However, he has another reason for the omission: MOSES *might know nothing of it.* To which, if I only opposed his Lordship's own words in another place, where (giving us the reasons why MOSES did *know something* of a future state) he observes, there are *certain rites, which seem to allude or have a remote relation to this very doctrine*<sup>4</sup>, it might be deemed sufficient. But I will go further, and observe, that, from the very LAWS of MOSES themselves, we have an internal evidence of his knowledge of this doctrine. Amongst the Laws against Gentile Divinations, there is one directed against that species of them, called by the Greeks, NECROMANCY, or *invocation of the dead*; which necessarily implies, in the Lawgiver who forbids it, as well as in the offender who uses it, the *knowledge of a future state*.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. v. p. 239.

3. This being the fate of his Lordship's two reasons, we are now abandoned by him, and left to follow our own inventions, or to take up with SOME WHIMSICAL REASON FOR THE OMISSION; that is, to allow that, as the Jews were under an extraordinary Providence, Moses in quality of Lawgiver had NO OCCASION for the doctrine of a future state.

However, his Lordship dissatisfied, as well he might, with the solutions hitherto proposed, returns again to the charge; and in his *Corona operis*, the book of FRAGMENTS, more openly opposes the doctrine of the *Divine Legation*; and enlarges and expatiates upon the reason before given for the omission; namely, *the many superstitious this doctrine had begotten in Egypt*.

“ ONE CANNOT SEE WITHOUT SURPRIZE (says  
 “ his Lordship) a doctrine so useful to ALL Reli-  
 “ gion, and therefore incorporated into ALL the  
 “ Systems of Paganism, left wholly out of that  
 “ of the JEWS. Many probable reasons might be  
 “ brought to shew, that it was an Egyptian doc-  
 “ trine before the Exode, and this particularly,  
 “ that it was propagated from Egypt, so soon;  
 “ at least, afterwards, by all those who were in-  
 “ structed like MOSES, in the wisdom of that Peo-  
 “ ple. He transported much of his Wisdom into  
 “ the scheme of Religion and Government, which  
 “ he gave the Israelites; and, amongst other  
 “ things, certain Rites, which may seem to al-  
 “ lude, or have a remote relation to, this very  
 “ doctrine. Tho’ this doctrine therefore, had  
 “ not been that of ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB,  
 “ He might have adopted it with as little scruple,  
 “ as he did many customs and institutions merely  
 Vol. IV. C c “ EGYPT-



“ Egyptian. He had to do with a rebellious,  
 “ but a superstitious, people. In the first Charac-  
 “ ter, they made it necessary that he should ne-  
 “ glect nothing which might add weight to his or-  
 “ dinances, and contribute to keep them in awe.  
 “ In the second, their disposition was extremely  
 “ proper to receive such a doctrine, and to be in-  
 “ fluenced by it. *Shall we say that an hypothesis of*  
 “ *future rewards and punishments, was USELESS*  
 “ *among a People who lived under a Theocracy,* and  
 “ that the future Judge of other People, was  
 “ their immediate Judge and King, who resided  
 “ in the midst of them, and who dealt out re-  
 “ wards and punishments on every occasion? Why  
 “ then were so many precautions taken? Why  
 “ was a solemn Covenant made with God, as with  
 “ a temporal Prince? Why were so many pro-  
 “ mises and threatnings of rewards and punish-  
 “ ments, temporal indeed, but future and con-  
 “ tingent, as we find in the book of Deuteronomy,  
 “ most pathetically held out by Moses? Would  
 “ there have been any more impropriety in hold-  
 “ ing out those of one kind than those of another,  
 “ because the supreme Being, who disposed and  
 “ ordered both, was in a particular manner pre-  
 “ sent amongst them? Would an addition to the  
 “ catalogue of rewards and punishments more re-  
 “ mote, but eternal, and in all respects far greater,  
 “ have had no effect? I think neither of these  
 “ things can be said.

“ What shall we say then? How came it to pass,  
 “ this addition was not made? I will mention what  
 “ occurs to me, and shall not be over solicitous  
 “ about the weight that my reflections may deserve.  
 “ If the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and  
 “ of a future state had been revealed to MOSES,  
 “ that



“ that he might teach them to the Israelites, he  
 “ would have taught them most certainly. But he  
 “ did not teach them. They were therefore not  
 “ revealed to him. Why they were not so reveal-  
 “ ed some PERT DIVINE OR OTHER WILL BE  
 “ READY TO TELL YOU. For me, I dare not pre-  
 “ sume to guess. But this, I may presume to ad-  
 “ vance, that since these Doctrines were not re-  
 “ vealed by God to his servant Moses, it is highly  
 “ probable that this Legislator made a scruple of  
 “ teaching them to the Israelites, how well so-  
 “ ever instructed he might be in them himself,  
 “ and howsoever useful to Government he might  
 “ think them. The superstitious and idolatrous  
 “ rites of the Egyptians, like those of other  
 “ nations, were founded on the Polytheism, and  
 “ the Mythology that prevailed, and were suf-  
 “ fered to prevail, amongst the Vulgar, and  
 “ that made the sum of their Religion. It  
 “ seemed to be a point of policy to direct all  
 “ these absurd opinions and practices to the ser-  
 “ vice of Government, instead of attempting to  
 “ root them out. But then the great difference  
 “ between rude and ignorant nations and such as  
 “ were civilized and learned, like the Egyptians,  
 “ seems to have been this, that the former had  
 “ no other system of Religion than these absurd  
 “ opinions and practices, whereas the latter had  
 “ an *inward* as well as an *outward* Doctrine. There  
 “ is reason to believe that natural Theology and  
 “ natural Religion had been taught and practised  
 “ in the ancient Theban Dynasty; and it is pro-  
 “ bable that they continued to be an *inward* doc-  
 “ trine in the rest of Egypt; while Polytheism,  
 “ Idolatry, and all the MYSTERIES, all the impie-  
 “ ties, and all the follies of Magic, were the *out-*

“ward doctrine. Moses might be let into a  
“knowledge of both; and under the patronage  
“of the Princess, whose Foundling he was, he  
“might be initiated into those *Mysteries*, where  
“the secret doctrine alone was taught, and the  
“outward exploded. But we cannot imagine that  
“the Children of Israel, in general, enjoyed the  
“same privilege, nor that the Masters were so  
“lavish, to their Slaves, of a favour so distin-  
“guished, and often so hard to obtain. No.  
“The Children of Israel knew nothing more than  
“the outside of the Religion of Egypt, and if the  
“doctrine, we speak of, was known to them, it  
“was known only in the superstitious rites, and  
“with all the fabulous circumstances in which it  
“was dressed up and presented to vulgar belief.  
“It would have been hard therefore to teach, or  
“to renew this Doctrine in the minds of the Israel-  
“ites, without giving them an occasion the more,  
“to recal the polytheistical fables, and practise the  
“idolatrous Rites they had learnt during their  
“Captivity. Rites and Ceremonies are often so  
“equivocal, that they may be applied to very dif-  
“ferent doctrines. But when they are so closely  
“connected with one Doctrine that they are not  
“applicable to another, to teach the Doctrine is,  
“in some sort, to teach the Rites and Ceremonies,  
“and to authorize the fables on which they are  
“founded. Moses therefore being at liberty  
“to teach this doctrine of rewards and punish-  
“ments in a future state, or not to teach it, might  
“very well choose the latter; tho’ he indulged the  
“Israelites, on account of the hardness of their  
“hearts, and by the divine permission, as it is  
“presumed, in several observances and customs  
“which did not lead directly, tho’ even they did  
“so



“ so perhaps in consequence, to the Polytheism and  
 “ Idolatry of Egypt<sup>a</sup>.”

What a Babel of bad reasoning has his Lordship here accumulated out of the rubbish of false and inconsistent Principles ! And all, to insult the Temple of God and the Fortress of Mount Sion. Sometimes, he represents MOSES as a divine Messenger, and distinguishes between what was revealed, and what was not revealed, unto him; and then, *a future state not being revealed to MOSES was the reason he did not teach it.* Sometimes again, he considers him as a mere human Lawgiver, acquiring all his knowledge of Religion and Politics from the Egyptians, in whose *secret* Learning he had been intimately instructed; and then, the reason of the omission is, *lest the Doctrine of a future state should have drawn the Israelites into those Egyptian superstitions,* from which, it was MOSES's purpose to estrange them. All these inconsistencies in *Fact* and *Reasoning*, his Lordship delivers in the same breath, and without the least intimation of any change in his Principles or Opinions.

But let us follow him step by step, without troubling our heads about his real sentiments. It is enough, that we confute all he says, whether under his own, or any assumed Character.

He begins with confessing, that ONE CANNOT SEE WITHOUT SURPRIZE, *a doctrine so useful to ALL Religions, and therefore incorporated into ALL the Systems of Paganism, lest wholly out of that of the Jews.*

<sup>a</sup> Vol. v. p. 238—9—40—41.



At length then it appears, that this OMISSION is no light or trivial matter, which may be accounted for, as he before supposed, by MOSES's *disbelief* of the doctrine; his *ignorance* of it; or the *imaginary mischiefs* it might possibly produce. We may be allowed then to think it deserved all the pains, the Author of the *Divine Legation of Moses* has bestowed upon it: whose WHIMSICAL REASONING, if it ended in a demonstration of the truth of Revealed Religion, is sufficiently attoned for, tho' it were a little out of the common road: for in this case the old proverb would hold true, that *the furthest way about is the nearest way home.*

His Lordship proceeds to shew, in direct opposition to what he said before, that MOSES could not be ignorant of the doctrine of a future state, because the Egyptians taught it: His knowledge of it, (my Lord tells us) further appears from an *internal* circumstance, *some of his rites seeming to allude, or to have a remote relation to, this very doctrine.* This I observe, to his Lordship's credit. The remark is just and accurate. But we are in no want of his *remote relation*; I have shewn just above, that the Jewish Laws against *Necromancy* necessarily imply Moses's knowledge of the Doctrine.

He then goes on to explain the advantages which, humanly speaking, the Israelites must have received from this Doctrine, in the temper and circumstances with which they left Egypt. MOSES, says he, *had to do with a rebellious and a superstitious People.* This likewise I observe to his credit: It has the same marks of sagacity and truth; and brings us to the very verge of the *Solution*, proposed by the Author of the *Divine Legation*; which

which is, that the Israelites were indeed under an EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE, which supplied all the disadvantages of the OMISSION. Under a *common and unequal* Providence, RELIGION cannot subsist without the doctrine of a future state: for Religion implying a just retribution of reward and punishment, which under such a Providence is not dispensed, a future state must needs subvene, to prevent the whole Edifice from falling into ruin. And thus we account for the *fact*, which his Lordship so amply acknowledges, viz. *that the doctrine of a future state was most useful to ALL Religions, and therefore incorporated into ALL the Religions of Paganism.* But where an EXTRAORDINARY Providence is administered, good and evil are exactly distributed; and therefore, in this circumstance, a FUTURE STATE is not necessary for the support of Religion. It is not to be found in the Mosaic Oeconomy; yet this Oeconomy subsisted for many ages; Religion therefore did not need it; or in other words, it was supported by an EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE.

This is the argument of the *Divine Legation*. And now, let us consider his Lordship's present attempt to evade it.

*Shall we say, that an Hypothesis of future rewards and punishments was useless amongst a people who lived under a THEOCRACY, and that the future Judge of other People was their immediate Judge and King, who resided in the midst of them, and who dealt out rewards and punishments on every occasion? WHY THEN WERE SO MANY PRECAUTIONS taken? &c.*

First, let me observe, that the PRECAUTIONS here objected to, are intended for an insinuation against the truth of Moses's Promise of an *extraordi-*



*nary Providence.* A kind of SOPHISM which his Lordship advances, and only holds in common with the rest who have written against the *Divine Legation*: and which I shall here, after much forbearance on my part, expose as it deserves.

MOSES affirms again and again, that his People were under an *extraordinary Providence*. He affirms it indeed; but as it is not a self evident truth, it needs to be proved. Till then, the Unbeliever is at liberty to urge any circumstance in the Jewish Law or History, which may seem to bring the *reality* of that Providence into question: The same liberty too, has the Believer; if, at least, he can persuade himself to make use of it; as many, so professing themselves, have done both in their Writings and Discourings against the *Divine Legation*. Things were in this train, when I undertook the defence of MOSES: And to obviate all objections to the Legislator's credit, arising from any doubtful or unfavourable circumstance in the Law or History of the Jews concerning this *extraordinary Providence*, I advanced the INTERNAL ARGUMENT of the OMISSION. An argument which necessarily inferred "that an extraordinary Providence was in fact administered in the Jewish Republic." What change did this make in the state of the case? A very great one. Unbelievers were now indeed at liberty, and Believers too, if so perversely inclined, to oppose, and, as they could, to confute the Argument of the *Divine Legation*: But by no rules of good Logic could they come over again with those scripture-difficulties to Moses's credit, which the argument of the *Divine Legation* had entirely obviated, and which it still continued to exclude, so long as it remained unanswered. For while a demonstrated truth stands good, no difficulties arising



sing from it, however inexplicable, can have any weight against that superior evidence. Not to admit this fundamental maxim of common sense, would be to unsettle many a physical and mathematical demonstration, as well as this *moral* one.

I say therefore, as things now stand, To oppose difficulties against the administration of an extraordinary Providence, after that Providence has been proved, and before the proof has been confuted, is the most palpable and barefaced imposition on our understanding. In which however, his Lordship is but one of a hundred: and truly, in this, the least indecent and inconsistent of the hundred; as his declared purpose is to destroy the credit and authority of the Jewish Lawgiver.

I shall not however decline to examine the weight of these objections, tho' they be so vainly and sophistically obtruded.

If there was this EXTRAORDINARY Providence administered, says his Lordship, *Why so many Precautions taken? Why was a solemn covenant made with God as with a temporal Prince? Why were so many promises and threatnings of rewards and punishments, temporal indeed, but future and contingent, as we find in the Book of Deuteronomy, most pathetically held out by Moses?* This difficulty is not hard to be resolved. We find throughout that Book which we Believers are wont to call the *History of Providence*, but which his Lordship is pleased to intitle, *Tales more extravagant than those of Amadis de Gaule*, that God, in his moral Government of the World, always employs human means, as far as those means will go, and never interposes with his *extraordinary Providence*, but when they will go no further. To do  
otherwise,

otherwise, would be an unnecessary waste of Miracles; better fitted to confound our knowledge of NATURE, by obscuring the harmony of order, in such a control of its delegated Powers, than to make manifest the presence of its sovereign Lord and Master. This method in God's moral Government, all our ideas of Wisdom seem to support. Now when He, the great Director of the Universe, had decreed to rule the Jewish People in an extraordinary way, he did not propose to supersede any of the measures of civil regimen. And this, I hope, will be esteemed a sufficient answer to—WHY SO MANY PRECAUTIONS TAKEN, &c. But the Reader will find this argument drawn out more at large, in my remarks on the same kind of sophistry employed by Dr. SYKES.

But (says his Lordship) *would the hypothesis of a future state have been useless, &c.? Would there (as his Lordship goes on) have been any more impropriety in holding out those [sanctions] of one kind than those of another, because the supreme Being, who disposed and ordered both, was in a particular manner present amongst them? Would an addition of rewards and punishments, (more remote, but eternal, and in all respects far greater) to the catalogue, have had no effect? I think neither of these things can be said.* His Lordship totally mistakes the drift of the Argument of the Divine Legation, which infers no more, from the fact of the omission, than this, That the Jewish Oeconomy, administered by an extraordinary Providence, could do without the service of the omitted Doctrine; not, that that Doctrine, even under such a Dispensation, was *of no use*, much less that it was IMPROPER. But then one of his Followers, will be ready to say, "If a future state was not improper, much more if it was of use,

use, under an extraordinary dispensation, How came Moses not to give it?" I reply, for great and wise ends of Providence vastly countervailing the use of that Doctrine, which, in the last volume of this work, will be explained at large.

Lord Bolingbroke proceeds next to tell us, what occurs to Him, concerning the REASONS of the *omission*; and previously assures us, he is *not over solicitous about their weight*. This, I suppose, is to make his *Counters* pass current: For then they become the *money of fools*, as Hobbes expresses it, when we cease to be *solicitous* about their worth; when we try them by their colour, not their weight; their Rhetoric, and not their Logic. However this must be said with an exception to the first, which is altogether logical, and very diverting.

If (says his Lordship) *the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and a future state had been revealed to Moses, that he might teach them to the Israelites, he would have taught them most certainly. But he did not teach them. They were, therefore, not revealed.* It is in mood and figure, you see; and, I warrant you, designed to supply what was wanting in the *Divine Legation*: Tho' as the Author of that book certainly believed, *these doctrines were not revealed*, 'tis ten to one but he thought Moses was not at liberty to teach them: Unless you can suppose that his Lordship, who believed nothing of Revelation, might believe Moses to be restrained from teaching what God had not revealed to him; and yet, that the Author of the *Divine Legation*, who held Moses's pretensions to be true, might think him at liberty to go beyond his Commission. Thus far,



far, then, we may be said to agree: But this good understanding does not last long. His Lordship's modesty and my pertness soon make the breach as wide as ever. — *Why they were not so revealed* (says his Lordship) *some PERT DIVINE or other will be ready to tell you. For me, I dare not pretend to guess.* My forwardness, and his Lordship's backwardness, are equally well suited to our respective principles. Should his Lordship have guessed, it might have brought him to what he most dreaded, the divine original of the Jewish Religion: Had I forbore to guess, I had betrayed my cause, and left those DATA unemployed, which enabled me, I do not say to guess, but to discover, and to demonstrate the Divine Legation of Moses.

However, *This*, his Lordship will presume to advance, *that since these doctrines were not revealed by God to his servant MOSES, it is highly probable, that the Legislator made a scruple of teaching them to the Israelites, howsoever well instructed he might be in them himself, and howsoever useful to Government he might think them.*

Here, you see, he personates a Believer, who holds MOSES to be an inspired Lawgiver: But observe how poorly he sustains his part! Either MOSES did indeed receive the LAW from God, or he did not. If he did not, Why are we mocked with the distinction between what was revealed, and what was not revealed, when nothing was revealed? If MOSES did receive the *Law* from God, Why are we still worse mocked with the distinction between what was revealed, and what was not revealed, when every thing regarding the Dispensation must needs be revealed; as well, the direction to omit  
a Future

*a Future State*, as the direction to *inculcate the Unity of the Godhead*? Why was all this mockery? the Reader asks. For a very good purpose: it was to draw us from the TRUE object of our inquiry, which is, What GOD intended by the *omission*; to that FANTASTIC object, which only respects, what MOSES intended by it. For the intention of GOD supposes the mission and inspiration of a Prophet; but the intention of MOSES, when considered in contradistinction to the intention of GOD, terminates in the human views of a mere politic Law-giver; which leads us back again to Infidelity.

But he soon strips Moses of his Mission, and leaves him to cool, in Querpo, under his civil character as before. And here he considers, What it was, which, under this character, might induce Moses to *omit* a future state; and he finds it to be, lest this doctrine should have hurt the doctrine of the UNITY, which it was his purpose to inculcate amongst his People, in opposition to the Egyptian Polytheism.

*Moses (says his Lordship) it is highly probable, made a scruple of teaching these Doctrines to the Israelites, howsoever well instructed he might be in them himself, and howsoever useful to Government he might think them. The People of Egypt, like all other nations, were Polytheists, but different from all others: there was in Egypt an inward as well as outward Doctrine: Natural Theology and natural Religion were the INWARD Doctrine; while Polytheism, Idolatry, and ALL THE MYSTERIES, all the impieties and follies of magic, were the OUTWARD Doctrine. Moses was initiated into those Mysteries where the secret doctrine alone was taught, and the outward exploded.—For an accurate as well as just Divider commend me to his*

his Lordship. In distinguishing between the *inward* and *outward* doctrines of the Egyptians, he puts *all the Mysteries* amongst the *outward*: tho' if they had an *inward*, it must necessarily be part of those *Mysteries*. But he makes amends presently, (but his amends to truth is, as it should be, always at the expence of a contradiction) and directly says, that MOSES LEARNT THE INWARD DOCTRINE IN THE MYSTERIES. Let this pass: He proceeds—*Moses had the knowledge of both outward and inward. Not so the Israelites in general. They knew nothing more than the outside of the Religion of Egypt. And if a future state was known to them, it was known only in the superstitious rites, and with all the fabulous circumstances, in which it was dressed up and presented to the vulgar belief. It would be hard therefore to teach or to renew this doctrine in the minds of the Israelites, without giving them an occasion the more to recalc the Polytheistical fables, and practise the idolatrous rites they had learnt during the Captivity.*

The Children of Israel, it seems, *knew no more of a future state, than by the superstitious rites and fabulous circumstances with which it was dressed up and presented to the public belief.* What then? MOSES, he owns, *knew more.* And what hindered MOSES from communicating of his knowledge to the People, when he took them under his protection, and gave them a new Law and a new Religion? His Lordship gives us to understand that this People knew as little of the UNITY; for he tells us, it was amongst the *inward* Doctrines of the Egyptians: yet this did not hinder Moses from instructing his people in the doctrine of the Unity. What then should hinder his teaching them the *inward* doctrine of a future state, divested of its fabulous circumstances? He had divested *Religious worship* of the absurdities



absurdities of Demi-Gods and Heroes; What should hinder him from divesting a *future state* of Charon's boat and the Elysian fields? But the notion of a future state would have recalled those fabulous circumstances which had been long connected with it. And was not Religious worship, under the idea of a *sacred Duty*, and a *temporal King*, much more apt to recal the polytheism of Egypt? Yet Moses ventured upon this inconvenience, for the sake of great advantages: Why should he not venture on the other, for the sake of greater? for the doctrine of a future state, is, as his Lordship confesses, even necessary both to civil and religious Society. But what does he talk of the danger of giving entry to the fables and superstitions concerning the Soul (superstitions, which, tho' learnt indeed in the Captivity, were common to all the nations under Polytheism) when in other places he assures us, that Moses indulged the Israelites in the most characteristic superstitions of Egypt?

However, let us see how he supports this profound observation. *Rites and Ceremonies* (says his Lordship) *are often so equivocal, that they may be applied to very different doctrines. But when they are so closely connected with a doctrine, that they are not applicable to another, to teach the doctrine, is, IN SOME SORT, to teach the rites and ceremonies.—In some sort*, is well put in, to soften the deformity of this inverted logic. His point is to shew that a superstitious Rite, relating to, and dependent on, a certain Doctrine, will obtrude itself whenever that Doctrine is taught: and his reasoning is only calculated to prove, that where the Rite is practised, the Doctrine will soon follow. This may indeed be true. But then it does not hold in the converse, that the Rite follows the Doctrine: because a Principal

cipal may stand without its Dependent; but a Dependent can never subsist without its Principal.

Under cover of these grotesque shapes, into which his Lordship has travestied the Jewish Lawgiver, he concludes, that *MOSES being AT LIBERTY to teach this doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state, or not to teach it, he might very well chuse the latter*—Yet it was but at the very beginning of this paragraph that he tells us, *Moses was NOT AT LIBERTY to teach or not to teach*. His words are these, *Since this doctrine was not revealed by God to his servant Moses, it is highly probable that this Legislator MADE A SCRUPLE of teaching it*. But his Lordship very well knows that Statesmen soon get the better of their scruples; and then, by another fetch of political casuistry, find themselves more at liberty than ever.

I had observed above that our noble Discourser, who makes *MOSES* so scrupulous that he would, on no terms, afford a handle for one single superstition of Egypt to get footing among his people; has, on other occasions, charged him with introducing them in the lump. He was sensible that his Inconsistency was likely to be detected, and therefore he now attempts to obviate it.—*Tho' he [Moses] indulged the Israelites, on account of the hardness of their hearts, and by the divine permission, as it is presumed, in several observations and customs, which did not LEAD directly, tho' even they did so perhaps IN CONSEQUENCE, to the Polytheism and Idolatry of Egypt*. And could the teaching the doctrine of a future state possibly do more than LEAD IN CONSEQUENCE, (as his Lordship elegantly expresses it) *to the Polytheism and Idolatry of Egypt*, by drawing after it those superstitious Rites and fabulous circumstances which,

which, he tells us, then attended the popular notion of such a State? If, for the *hardness of their hearts*, they were indulged in *several observances and customs*, which only led in consequence to Polytheism and Idolatry, Why, for the *same hardness of heart*, were they not indulged with the doctrine of a future state, which did not lead, but by a very remote consequence, to Polytheism and Idolatry? Especially since this *hardness of heart* would less bear denying them a DOCTRINE so alluring to the human mind, than denying them a RITE, to which habit only and old custom had given an occasional propensity. Again, those Rites indulged to the People, for the *hardness of their hearts*, had, in themselves, little use or tendency to advance the ends of the Jewish Dispensation; but rather retarded them: Whereas a future state, by his Lordship's own confession, is *most useful to all Religions, and therefore incorporated into all the Systems of Paganism*; and was particularly useful to the Israelites, who were, he says, both a *rebellious* and a *superstitious* People: dispositions, which not only made it necessary to omit nothing that might inforce obedience, but likewise facilitated the reception and supported the influence of the doctrine in question.

The Reader has here the whole of his Lordship's boasted Solution of this important Circumstance of the OMISSION, in the Mosaic Law. And he sees how vainly this Resolver of doubts labours to elude its force. Overwhelmed, as it were, with the weight of so irresistible a Power, after long wriggling to get free, he at length crawls forth; but so maimed and broken, so impotent and fretful, that all his remaining strength is in his venom. And this, he now sheds in abundance over the whole Mosaic

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Oeconomy. It is pronounced to be a gross imposture; and this very circumstance of the OMISSION is given as an undoubted proof of the accusation.

—“ Can we be surpris’d then (says his Lordship) that the Jews ascribed to the all-perfect Being, on various occasions, such a conduct and such Laws as are inconsistent with his most obvious perfections? Can we believe such a conduct and such Laws to have been his, on the word of the proudest and most lying Nation in the world? Many other considerations might have their place here. But I shall confine myself to one; *which I do not remember to have seen nor heard urged on one side, nor ANTICIPATED on the other.* To shew then, the more evidently, how ABSURD, as well as IMPIOUS it is to ascribe these Mosaical Laws to God, let it be considered, that NEITHER the people of Israel, nor their Legislator perhaps, KNEW ANY THING OF ANOTHER LIFE, wherein the crimes committed in this life are to be punished. Altho’ he might have learned this Doctrine, which was not so much a secret doctrine, as it may be presumed that the Unity of the supreme God was, amongst the Egyptians. Whether he had learned both or either, or neither of them in those schools, cannot be determined: BUT THIS MAY BE ADVANCED WITH ASSURANCE; If Moses knew, that crimes, and therefore Idolatry, one of the greatest, were to be punished in another life, he deceived the people in the Covenant they made, by his intervention, with God. If he did not know it, I say it with horror, the consequence, *according to the hypothesis I oppose*, must be, that God deceived both him and them. In either case, a covenant

nant

“nant or bargain was made, wherein, the conditions of obedience and disobedience were not fully, nor by consequence, fairly stated. The Israelites had better things to hope, and worse to fear, than those which were expressed in it: and their whole history seems to shew how much need they had of these additional motives to restrain them from Polytheism and Idolatry, and to answer the assumed Purposes of divine Providence.”

This argument, *advanced with so much assurance*, his Lordship says, he does *not remember to have seen, or heard urged on one side, nor anticipated on the other*. A gentle reproof, as we are to understand it, of the Author of the *Divine Legation*: for none but He, I think, could *anticipate* an objection to an ARGUMENT which none but He had employed. However, tho’ it be now too late to *anticipate*, we have still time enough to answer.

*Let it be considered* (says his Lordship) *that perhaps Moses KNEW NOTHING of another life, wherein the crimes committed in this life are to be punished.—Considered by whom? Not by his Lordship, or his kind Readers: for his former reasoning, which I will here again repeat, had brought them to consider otherwise. These are his words: “Many probable reasons might be brought to shew, that this was an Egyptian doctrine before the exode; and this particularly, that it was propagated from Egypt, so soon at least afterwards, by all those who were instructed LIKE MOSES, in the wisdom of that People. He transported much of this wisdom into the scheme of Religion and Government which he*

<sup>a</sup> Vol. v. p. 194—5.

“ gave the Israelites; and, among other things,  
 “ certain Rites, which seem to allude, or  
 “ HAVE A REMOTE RELATION TO, THIS DOCT-  
 “ TRINE <sup>b</sup>.” This possibly might have recurred to  
 his Lordship, while he was boasting of his new  
 and *unanticipated* objection; and therefore, in the  
 tricking it up amongst his FRAGMENTS, to his *per-*  
*haps*, he adds, by a very happy corrective, *altho’*  
*Moses might have learnt this Doctrine, which was*  
 NOT SO MUCH A SECRET doctrine, as it may be pre-  
 sumed that the Unity of the supreme God was amongst  
 the Egyptians. But he had done better to leave  
 his contradictions uncorrected, and trust to the  
 rare sagacity of his Readers to find them out. He  
 had ever an ill hand at reconciling matters; so in  
 the case before us, in the very act of covering one  
 contradiction, he commits another. He is here  
 speaking of a future state, divested of its fabulous  
 circumstances; *Perhaps*, says he, MOSES KNEW  
 NOTHING OF ANOTHER LIFE—Which was NOT SO  
 MUCH A SECRET doctrine as that of the Unity.  
 Now, Reader, turn back a moment, to the long  
 quotation from his 239th page, and there thou wilt  
 find, that a future state, divested of its fabulous  
 circumstances, WAS AS MUCH A SECRET Doctrine,  
 as that of the Unity.—“ There is reason to believe,  
 “ that natural Theology and natural Religion were  
 “ INWARD doctrines amongst the Egyptians.  
 “ MOSES might be let into a knowledge of BOTH  
 “ by being initiated into those *Mysteries* where the  
 “ secret doctrine alone was taught. But we can-  
 “ not imagine, that the Children of Israel in  
 “ general enjoyed the same privilege. No, *they*  
 “ knew nothing more than the outside of the Egyp-  
 “ tian Religion: and if the Doctrine we speak of

<sup>b</sup> Vol. v. p. 328—9.



“ [A FUTURE STATE] was known to them, it was  
 “ known only in the superstitious Rites, and with  
 “ all the fabulous circumstances, in which it was  
 “ dressed up and presented to vulgar belief.”—Is  
 not this, now, a plain declaration, that a *future*  
*state*, divested of its fabulous circumstances, *was*  
*as much a secret Doctrine as the doctrine of the Unity?*

But his Lordship's contradictions are the least of  
 my concern. It is his present Argument I have  
 now to do with. And this, he says, he *advances*  
 WITH ASSURANCE. It is fit he should. *Modesty*  
 would be very ill bestowed on such opinions.

He thinks he can reduce those who hold no fu-  
 ture state in the Jewish Oeconomy, to the neces-  
 sity of owning, that MOSES, or that GOD *himself*,  
*acted unfairly by the Israelites.* How so, You ask?  
 Because One or Other of them concealed that *state*.  
 And what if they did? Why then they concealed  
 one of the actual Sanctions of moral conduct, *fu-*  
*ture punishment.* But who told him, that this,  
 which, he confesses, was no sanction of the *Jewish*  
*Law*, was yet a Sanction in the moral conduct of  
 the *Jewish People*? Who, unless the ARTIFICIAL  
 THEOLOGER? the man he most despises and de-  
 cries.

And, even in *artificial Theology*, there is nothing  
 but the CALVINISTICAL tenet of *Original Sin*,  
 which gives the least countenance to so monstrous  
 an opinion; every thing in the GOSPEL, every  
 thing in NATURAL THEOLOGY, exclaims against  
 it.

JESUS, indeed, to prove that the departed Israel-  
 ites still existed, quotes the title God was pleased

to give himself, of *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; and this, together with their *existence*, proves likewise the *happiness* of their condition: for the relation they are said to stand in with God, shews them to be of his Kingdom. But we must remember, that the question with his Lordship is, not of *reward*, but *punishment*. Again, *JESUS* speaks, (indeed in a parable) of the deceased *rich man*, as in a *place of torment*. But we must remember that the scene was laid at a time when the Doctrine of a *future state* was become national. To know our heavenly master's sentiments on the question of *subjection to an unknown Sanction*, we should do well to consider his words, "The servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes". Now the will of a Master or Sovereign, declared in his Laws, never includes in it more than the *Sanctions* of those Laws. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* expressly distinguishes the sanction of the Jewish law from that of the Gospel; and makes the difference to consist in this, that the one was of *temporal* punishments, and the other of *future*. *He that despised Moses's Law* DIED *without mercy under two or three witnesses*. Of how MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the son of God? Which appeal is without common sense or honesty, on a supposition that the apostle held the Jews to be subject to *future* punishments, before that Sanction was promulged amongst them. From the GOSPEL therefore it cannot be inferred, that the Israelites,

<sup>c</sup> Luke xii. ver. 47-8.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. x. ver. 28-9.

while



while only following the Law of Moses, in which the sanction of a *future state* is not found, were liable or subject to the punishments of that state.

Let us see next, Whether NATURAL THEOLOGY, or *natural Religion* (as his Lordship is pleased, for some reason or other, to distinguish the terms) hath taught us, that a people, living under an *extraordinary Providence* or the immediate government of God, to whom he had given a Law and revealed a Religion, both supported by *temporal* sanctions only, could be deemed subject to those *future* punishments, unknown to them, which *natural Religion* before, and *revealed Religion* since, have discovered to be due to bad men living under a *common Providence*.

NATURAL RELIGION standeth on this Principle, "That the Governor of the Universe REWARDS " and PUNISHES moral Agents." The length or shortness of human existence comes not primarily into the idea of Religion; not even into that compleat idea of Religion delivered by St. Paul, in his general definition of it. The Religionist, says he, *must believe that God is, and that he is a REWARDER of those who seek him.*

While God exactly distributed his rewards and punishments *here*, the light of reason directed men to look no further for the Sanctions of his Laws. But when it came to be seen, that He was *not always* a Rewarder and a Punisher *here*, men necessarily concluded, from his moral attributes, that he would be so, *hereafter*: and consequently, that this life was but a small portion of the human duration. Men had not yet speculated on the



permanent nature of the Soul: And when they did so, that consideration, which, under an *ordinary* Providence came strongly in aid of the *moral argument* for another life, had no tendency, under the *extraordinary*, to open to them the prospects of *futurity*: because, tho' they saw the Soul unaffected by those causes which brought the body to destruction, yet they held it to be equally dependent on the Will of the Creator: Who, amongst the various means of its dissolution, (of which they had no idea) had, for aught they knew, provided one, or more than one, for that purpose.

In this manner was a *FUTURE STATE* brought, by natural light, into Religion: and from thenceforth, became a necessary part of it. But under the Jewish *THEOCRACY*, God was an exact Rewarder and Punisher, *here*. Natural light therefore evinced that under such an administration, the subjects of it did not become liable to *future* Punishments till this sanction was known amongst them.

Thus *NATURAL* and *REVEALED RELIGION* shew, that his Lordship calumniated both, when he affirmed, that, *according to the hypothesis he opposed*, *MOSES DECEIVED the people in the Covenant they made, by his intervention, with God: Or that, if Moses did not know the doctrine of a future state, then GOD DECEIVED both him and them.*

Should it be asked, how God will deal with wicked men thus dying under the Mosaic Dispensation? I will answer, in the words of Dr. SAM. CLARKE, on a like occasion. He had demonstrated a selfmoving Substance to be immaterial, and so, not perishable like Bodies. But, as this demonstration



he had promised; it is still harder on the poor *Dependant*, that he is not at liberty to receive more. True it is, that, in this case, the conditions are not fully stated; and therefore, according to his Lordship's Logic, BY CONSEQUENCE NOT FAIRLY. To strengthen this Consequence, his Lordship concludes in these words — *And their whole History seems to shew how much need they had of these additional motives* [future Rewards and Punishments] *to restrain them from Polytheism and Idolatry, and to answer the ASSUMED purposes of Divine Providence.*

Whoever puts all these things together — “That Moses was himself of the race of Israel — was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt — and capable of freeing his People from their Yoke — that he brought them within sight of the promised Land; a fertile Country, which they were to conquer and inhabit — that he instituted a system of Laws, which has been the admiration of the wisest men of all ages — that he understood the doctrine of a FUTURE STATE: and, by his knowledge gained in Egypt, was not ignorant of the efficacy of it in general; and by his full experience of the rebellious and superstitious temper of his own People, could not but see how useful it would have been to them in particular.” — Whoever, I say, puts all these things together (and all these things are amongst his Lordship's CONCESSIONS) and at the same time considers, that Moses, throughout his whole system of Law and Religion, is entirely silent concerning a future state of Rewards and Punishments, will, I believe, conclude, that there was something more in the omission than Lord BOLINGBROKE could fathom, or, at least, was willing to discover.

But



BUT let us turn from Moses's conduct, (which will be elsewhere considered at large) to his Lordship's, which is our present business.

1. First, he gives us his conjectures, to account for the *Omission*, exclusive of Moses's *Divine Legation*: but, as if dissatisfied with them himself (which he well might be, for they destroy one another)

2. He next attempts, You see, to prove, that the *Legation* could not be *divine*, from this very circumstance of the *omission*.

3. But now he will go further, and demonstrate that an EXTRAORDINARY PROVIDENCE, such a one as is represented by Moses, and which, the Author of the *Divine Legation* has proved, from the circumstance of the omission, was actually administered in the Jewish Republic, could not possibly be administered, without destroying *free will*; without making *Virtue sterile*; and without relaxing *universal benevolence*.

4. And lastly, to make all sure, he shuts up the account by shewing, that an extraordinary Providence could answer no reasonable end or purpose.

In his first and last order of evasions, he seems to be alone; but in the second and third, he had the pleasure of seeing, many an orthodox Writer against the Divine Legation, in CONSPIRACY with him, to use his Lordship's language, when he speaks of the good understanding between DIVINES and ATHEISTS.

I have examined his first and second order. The third and fourth remain to be considered; it is the last refuge of his infidelity.

1. His principal objection to the administration of an extraordinary Providence, such as MOSES promised to his people, on the part of GOD, is, that it would DESTROY FREE-WILL. But here let me observe, that he affects to disguise the immediate Object of his attack; and, in arguing against an *extraordinary Providence*, chuses to consider it in the general, as the Point rises out of an imaginary dispute between Himself and the Divines; who, he pretends, are dissatisfied with the present order of things, and require, as the terms of their acquiescence in GOD's government, the administration of an *equal Providence, here*. But, this obliquity in disguising the true object of his attack, nor being of itself sufficient to embarrass the question, he further supports it by a prevarication: for it is not true, that Divines are dissatisfied with the present order of things, or that they require a better. All the ground they ever gave his Lordship for imputing this scandal to them, being only their assertion, "That if the present state be the whole of Man's existence, then the justice of GOD would have more exactly dispensed good and evil *here*: but, as he has not done so, it follows, that there will be a state of Rewards and Punishments *hereafter*."

This premised, I proceed to his first objection,—  
 "In good earnest (says his Lordship) is a system  
 "of particular providences, in which the supreme  
 "Being, or his Angels, like his Ministers to re-  
 "ward, and his Executioners to punish, are con-  
 "stantly employed in the affairs of mankind,  
 "much more reasonable?" [than the *Gods* of  
 EPICURUS or the *morals* of POLEMO] "Would the  
 "JUSTICE of GOD be more MANIFEST in such a  
 "state of things than in the present? I see no

“ room for MERIT on the part of Man, nor for  
 “ JUSTICE on the part of God, in such a state.”

His Lordship asks, *whether the Justice of God would be more manifest in such a state of things, where good is constantly dispensed to the virtuous, and evil to the wicked, than in the present, where good and evil happen indifferently to all men?* If his Lordship, by *the present state of things*, includes the rectification of them in a future state, I answer, that the *justice of God would not be more manifest*, but equally and fully manifest in either case. If his Lordship does not include this rectification in a future state, then I answer his question by another: Would the Justice of the Civil Magistrate be more manifest, where he exactly dispenses rewards to good men, and punishment to evil, than where he suffers the Cunning and the Powerful to carve for themselves?

But he sees no room for merit on the part of Man, nor Justice on the part of God. If he does not see, it is his own fault. It is owing to his prevaricating both with himself and his Reader; to the turning his view from the Scripture-representation of an equal Providence, to the iniquities of Calvinistical election, and to the partialities of Fanatics concerning the favoured workings of the Spirit; and to his giving these to the reader, in its stead. How dextrously does he slide *Enthusiasm* and *Predestination* into the Scripture-doctrine of an equal Providence!—*If some men were DETERMINED TO GOODNESS by the secret workings of the spirit, &c.* Yes indeed, if you will be so kind to allow him, that under an equal Providence, the Will is overruled, he will be able to shew you, there is an end



of all merit and demerit. But this substituting ARTIFICIAL THEOLOGY (as he calls it when he is in an humour to abuse it) in the place of bible-theology, is his usual leger-de-main. So again,—*I can conceive still less, that individual Creatures before they have done either good or evil, nay, before their actual existence, can be the objects of predilection or aversion, of love or hatred, to God.* Who, of the Gospel-Divines, against whom he is here writing, would have him *conceive* any thing of this at all? It is the ARTIFICIAL THEOLOGER, the depraver, as he says, of the Gospel, who would draw him into so absurd a system. But what has this exploded *Theology*, that abounds only in human inventions, to do with the extraordinary Providence, represented in holy Writ! To say, that this Providence takes away man's merit and God's justice, is confounding all our ideas of right and wrong. Is it not the highest merit of a rational creature to comply with that motive which has most real weight? And is not God's justice then most manifest when the order of things present fewest difficulties and obscurities in our contemplation of it? His Lordship was plainly in these sentiments, when, arguing against God's compliance with the Jewish *hardness of heart*, he thought it more becoming the Master of the Universe, to bend the perverse stiffness of their Wills: and, when, arguing against a *future state* from the present good order of things, he will shew, he says, AGAINST DIVINES AND ATHEISTS IN CONJUNCTION, that there is little or no irregularity in the present dispensations of Providence; at least, not so much as the World commonly imagine. And why was this paradox advanced, but from a consciousness that the more exact the present administration of God's providence appeared, the more manifest it made



“ their duty; or than that of Galley-slaves who  
 “ ply at the oar, because they hear and see and  
 “ fear the lash of the boatswain<sup>1</sup>.”

If the perfection of a rational Creature consist in acting according to reason: and if his merit rises in proportion as he advances in perfection; How can that state which best secures him from acting irrationally, lessen or take away his merit? Are the actions of the Deity of less worth for his moral incapacity of being unjust or malignant? The motive which induces to right action is indeed more or less *excellent* according to the dignity or nature of the Agent: But the question here is not concerning the *excellence*, but the *power* of the motive to turn ACTION into PASSION; which is the only way I can conceive of destroying *merit* in the subject. Now I hold, that this fancy, That motives exterior to the Being on which they work, are able to turn an Agent to a Patient, is one of the greatest of *Physical* absurdities; and therefore commonly goes about disguised, in the garb of *Metaphysics*. For while AGENCY remains, MERIT subsists: the degrees of which do not depend on the less or greater force which the motives have on the affections, but on the more or less reason of the choice. In a word, there is no other way of taking away the merit and demerit of human actions, than by taking away agency, and making MAN passive, or, in other terms, A MACHINE.

But, to expose in a more popular way the futility of this reasoning, it will be sufficient to observe, that the objection holds equally against all religious Sanctions whatsoever. And so indeed it was

<sup>1</sup> Vol. v. p. 428.



that urged by Lord Shaftesbury was directed  
 not even more regarding *virtue*, than to the  
*virtue* of *Truth*. Without doubt, our Lord, not as  
 much as another, a *happy* *man*, not as well as an  
*angel* *Providence*. Now, if we were to appropriate  
 matters very much, it would seem, that, *happy*  
*man* *without* as *angel* *Providence* (for they are always  
 it is considered separately, as they belong to dif-  
 ferent *Dispensations*), would more strongly incline  
 the Will, than as *angel* *Providence* *without*, a *happy*  
*man*. as the value of *truth* above *virtue* *good* is in  
 this case, immensely great. But the human mind  
 being it confirmed, that the *dispute* of *good* takes  
 of proportionably from its influence, this brings  
 the force of the two sanctions nearer to an equality,  
 which at length proves but this. That the objection  
 to the *virtue* of *Truth* holds against all religious sanc-  
 tions whatsoever. In the use of which objection,  
 Lord Shaftesbury was not only more ingenious, as  
 he urged it against them *all*, but more consistent, as  
 he urged it on his doctrine of a perfect *disinterested-  
 ness* in our nature; whereas Lord Bolingbroke is  
 amongst those who hold, that *self-interest* and *virtue*,  
 tho' coincident, are two essential principles in the  
 human frame.

“ That two consistent motions act the Soul,

“ And one regards ITSELF, and one the world.

But we might go further, and resort upon both  
 these noble Adversaries of Religion, that the charge  
 of *making virtue servile* affects all *moral*, as well as  
 religious functions; as well that, whose existence  
 they allow, as those, which they would persuade  
 us to be visionary; both these illustrious Patrons  
 of infidelity acknowledging that moral sanction  
 which arises from *God's making the practice of virtue*

*our interest as well as duty*<sup>a</sup>. Now *interest* and *servility* is, it seems, the same thing, with these generous Spirits, as it was with the good old woman, Joinville speaks of, amongst the Enthusiasts of Syria, who carried about a pan of live-coals in one hand, and a dish of cold water in the other, to burn up Paradise and to extinguish Hell, that men might be brought to serve God dispassionately, without hope or fear.—So near a-kin are Fanaticism and Free-thinking, that their nature betrays them even when they strive most to hide their common parentage.

His Lordship's third cavil to an equal Providence is, that it would RELAX GENERAL BENEVOLENCE.

——“ But would there not be, at the same  
 “ time, some further defects in this scheme? I  
 “ think there would. It seems to me, that these  
 “ good men being thus distinguished by particular  
 “ providences, in their favour, from the rest of  
 “ mankind, might be apt either not to contract,  
 “ or to LOSE THAT GENERAL BENEVOLENCE,  
 “ which is a fundamental Principle of the Law of  
 “ Nature, and that PUBLIC SPIRIT, which is the  
 “ life and soul of Society. God has made the  
 “ practice of morality our interest, as well as our  
 “ duty. But men who found themselves con-  
 “ stantly protected from the evils that fell on  
 “ others, might grow insensibly to think them-  
 “ selves unconcerned in the common fate: and if  
 “ they relaxed in their zeal for the Public good,  
 “ they would relax in their virtue; for public  
 “ good is the object of Virtue. They might do

<sup>a</sup> Vol. v p. 429.

“ worse,

“ worse, spiritual pride might infect them. They  
 “ might become in their own imaginations the  
 “ little Flock, or the chosen Sheep. Others have  
 “ been so by the mere force of Enthusiasm, with-  
 “ out any such inducements as those which we  
 “ assume, in the same case; and experience has  
 “ shewn, that there are no Wolves like these  
 “ Sheep<sup>b</sup>.”

The *case assumed*, to which his Lordship objects, and against which he pretends to argue, is that of an *equal Providence which exactly distributes good to Virtue, and to Vice, evil*. Now the present objection to such a state is, an’ please you, that this *favourable distinction* of good, to the virtuous man, would be apt to *destroy his general benevolence and public spirit*. These, in his Lordship’s account, and so in mine too, are the most sublime of all Virtues; and therefore, it is agreed, they will be most highly rewarded: But the tendency of this *favourable distinction*, if you will believe him, may prove the *loss of general benevolence and public spirit*. As much as this shocks common sense, his Lordship has his reason. *God has made the practice of morality our INTEREST as well as duty. But men, who find themselves constantly protected from the evils that fall on others, might grow insensibly to think themselves unconcerned in the common fate.*

*God has made the practice of morality our INTEREST as well as duty.* Without doubt he has. But does it not continue to be our *interest*, under an equal, as well as under an unequal Providence? Nay, is it not more evidently and invariably so, in the absence of those inequalities which hinder our

<sup>b</sup> Vol. v. p. 429.



seeing clearly, and feeling constantly, that *the practice of morality is our INTEREST as well as duty.*

—But men, who found themselves constantly protected from the evils that fall on others, might grow insensibly to think themselves unconcerned in the COMMON FATE. What are those evils, under an equal Providence, which fall on others, and from which the good man is protected? Are they not the punishments inflicted on the wicked? And how is the good man protected from them? Is it not by his perseverance in Virtue? It is therefore impossible he should grow unconcerned to those evils which his Lordship calls the *common fate*, when he sees his *interest* and his duty so closely connected, that there is no way of avoiding those evils but by persevering in virtue. But the name of *common fate*, which he gives unto them, detects his prevarication. He pretends to reason against an equal Providence, yet slurs in upon us, in its stead, a Providence which only protects good men; or rather one certain species of good men; and leaves all other to their COMMON FATE. But admit it possible for the good man to relax in his benevolence, and to grow insensible to the common fate: there is, in the state here assumed, a speedy means of bringing him to himself; and that is, his being no longer protected from the evils that fall on others: for when men relax in their benevolence, his Lordship tells you, *they relax in their virtue*: and, give me leave to tell his Lordship, that when men relax in their virtue, an equal Providence relaxes in its protection; or, to speak more properly, the rewards of virtue are abated in proportion.

However, *spiritual pride* (he says) might infect the virtuous, thus protected: And this he will prove *a fortiori*, from the case of ENTHUSIASTS; who only  
 imagine

imagine they have this protection, and have it not. Now, what if we should say, it is this very *enthusiastic spirit* itself, and not the visions of *Protection* it is apt to raise, which is the true cause of *spiritual pride*? ENTHUSIASM is that temper of mind, in which the imagination has got the better of the judgment. In this disordered state of things, Enthusiasm, when it happens to be turned upon religious matters, becomes FANATICISM: and this, in its extreme, begets the fancy of our being the peculiar favorites of Heaven. Now, every one sees, that SPIRITUAL PRIDE is the *cause*, and not the *effect* of the disorder. For what but spiritual pride springing out of presumptive holiness, could bring the Fanatic to fancy himself exalted above the common condition of the Faithful? It is true, when he is got thus far, the folly which brought him hither, may carry him further; and then, all to come will be indeed the effect of his disorder. But suppose it were not the enthusiastic Spirit, but the visions of protection, it is apt to raise, which is the cause of spiritual pride; Is there no difference between a *vision* and a *reality*? Fancy may occasion those disorders which Fact may remove. This, I persuade myself, is the case here: The real communication of Grace purifies those passions, and exalts them into virtues, which, the strong delusion of such a state only renders more gross and violent. And here it may be worth while to take notice, that his Lordship, in this objection to an extraordinary Providence, from the hurt it does to general benevolence, seems to have had the *Jewish People* in his eye; who in the latter ages of their Republic, were commonly charged, and perhaps not altogether unjustly, with want of benevolence to the rest of mankind: a fact, which tho' it makes no-



thing for his purpose, makes very much for mine, as it furnishes me with an example to support what is here said of Fanaticism; an infirmity pretty general amongst the Jews of those Ages. They had outlived their extraordinary Providence; but not the memory, nor even the effects of it; nay, the warmer tempers were hardly brought to think it had ceased. This filled them with spiritual pride, as the elect of God; a disposition which, it is confessed, tends readily to destroy or to *relax* general benevolence. But what now are the natural consequences, which the actual administration of an equal Providence would have on the human mind? In this case, as in the other, a warm temper, whose object was Religion, would be obnoxious to the common weakness of our nature, and too apt to disgrace itself by spiritual pride: but as this is one of the vices which an equal Providence is always at hand to punish, the cure would be direct and speedy. The recovered Votary, we will now suppose to be received again into the number of the Good; and to find himself in the *little flock and chosen sheep*, as they are nick-named by this noble Writer. Well, but his danger is not yet over; the sense of this high prerogative of humanity might revive, in a warm temper, the still unmortified seeds of spiritual pride. Admit this to be the case; what follows? His pride revives indeed, but it is only to be again humbled: for punishment is still closely attendant on vice and folly. At length, this holy discipline, the necessary consequence of an equal Providence, effectually does its work; it purifies the mind from low and selfish partialities, and adorns the Will with general benevolence, public spirit, and love of all its fellow creatures,

What



What then could support his Lordship in so perverse a judgment concerning the state and condition of good men under an equal Providence? That which supports all his other insults on Religion; his sophistical change of the question. He objects to an equal Providence (which, Religionists pretend, hath been administered during one period of the Dispensation of Grace) where good men are constantly rewarded, and wicked men as constantly punished; and he takes the matter of his objection from the fanatical idea of a *favoured elect*, (which never existed but in over-heated brains) where reward and punishment are distributed, not on the proportions of merit and de-merit, but on the diabolic dreams of certain eternal decrees of election and reprobation, unrelated to any human principle of justice.

But now, Reader, keep the question steadily in your eye, and his Lordship's reasoning in this paragraph discloses such a complication of absurdities as will astonish you. You see an equal Providence, which, in and through the very act of rewarding benevolence, public spirit, and humility, becomes instrumental in producing, in those so rewarded, selfishness, neglect of the public, and spiritual pride. —

His Lordship's last objection to an extraordinary Providence is, that it would NOT ANSWER ITS END.

" I will conclude this head (says he) by observing, that we have *example* as well as *reason* for us, when we reject the hypothesis of particular Providences. God was the king of the  
" Jewish

“ Jewish People. His presence resided amongst  
 “ them, and his justice was manifested daily in re-  
 “ warding and punishing by unequivocal, signal,  
 “ and miraculous interpositions of his power.  
 “ The effect of all was this, the People rebelled  
 “ at one time and repented at another. Particular  
 “ Providences, directed by God himself immedi-  
 “ ately, upon the spot, if I may say so, had par-  
 “ ticular temporal effects only, none general nor  
 “ lasting: and the People were so little satisfied  
 “ with this system of Government that they de-  
 “ posed the supreme Being, and insisted to have  
 “ another King, and to be governed like their  
 “ neighbours ‘.”

In support of this last objection, the Reader sees,  
 his Lordship was forced to throw off the mask, and  
 fairly to tell us what he aimed at; that is to say, to  
 discredit the extraordinary Providence mentioned  
 by Moses. An equal Providence, says he, will  
 not answer its *end*. What is its end? Here, his  
 prevarications bring us, as usual, to our distinc-  
 tions. — When this Providence is administered for  
 the sake of *Particulars*, its first end is to discipline  
 us in virtue, and keep us in our duty: When ad-  
 ministrated for the sake of a *Community*, its first end  
 is to support the Institution it had erected. Now  
 his Lordship, proceeding from reason to example,  
 gives us this of the Jewish Republic, to prove  
 that an equal or extraordinary Providence does not  
 answer one or other or both these ends.

But it is unlucky for him, that here, where he  
 employs the example, he cannot forbear, any

more than in numberless other places of his writings, to tell us that he believes nothing of the matter. — *How long this Theocracy may be said to have continued* (says he) *I am quite unconcerned to know, and should be sorry to mispend my time in inquiring.* The example then is unreal, and only brought as an argument *ad hominem*. But, the misfortune is, that no laws of good reasoning will admit such an argument *ad hominem* on this question, *Of the EFFECTS of a REAL extraordinary Providence*; because the nature of the effects of a REAL Providence can never be discovered by the effects of a PRETENDED one. To say the truth, his Lordship is at present out of luck. For had he indeed believed the extraordinary Providence of the Jews to be *real*, his own representation of the case would, on his own principles, have proved it but *pretended*. For 'tis a principle with him, that where the means do not produce the end, such means (all pretences notwithstanding) are but human inventions. It is thus he argues against the Divinity of the Christian Religion; which he concludes to be an imposture from its not having effected that lasting reformation of manners, which he supposes was its principal design to accomplish.

So far as to the CHOICE of his example. He manages no better in the APPLICATION of it.

We have distinguished, concerning the *ends* of an extraordinary Providence. Let us suppose now, that his Lordship takes the principal end of the Jewish Theocracy to be the reformation of *Particulars*. He refers to their history, and pretends to shew they were not reformed. Now whatever other consequences may attend this supposed Fact,  
the



